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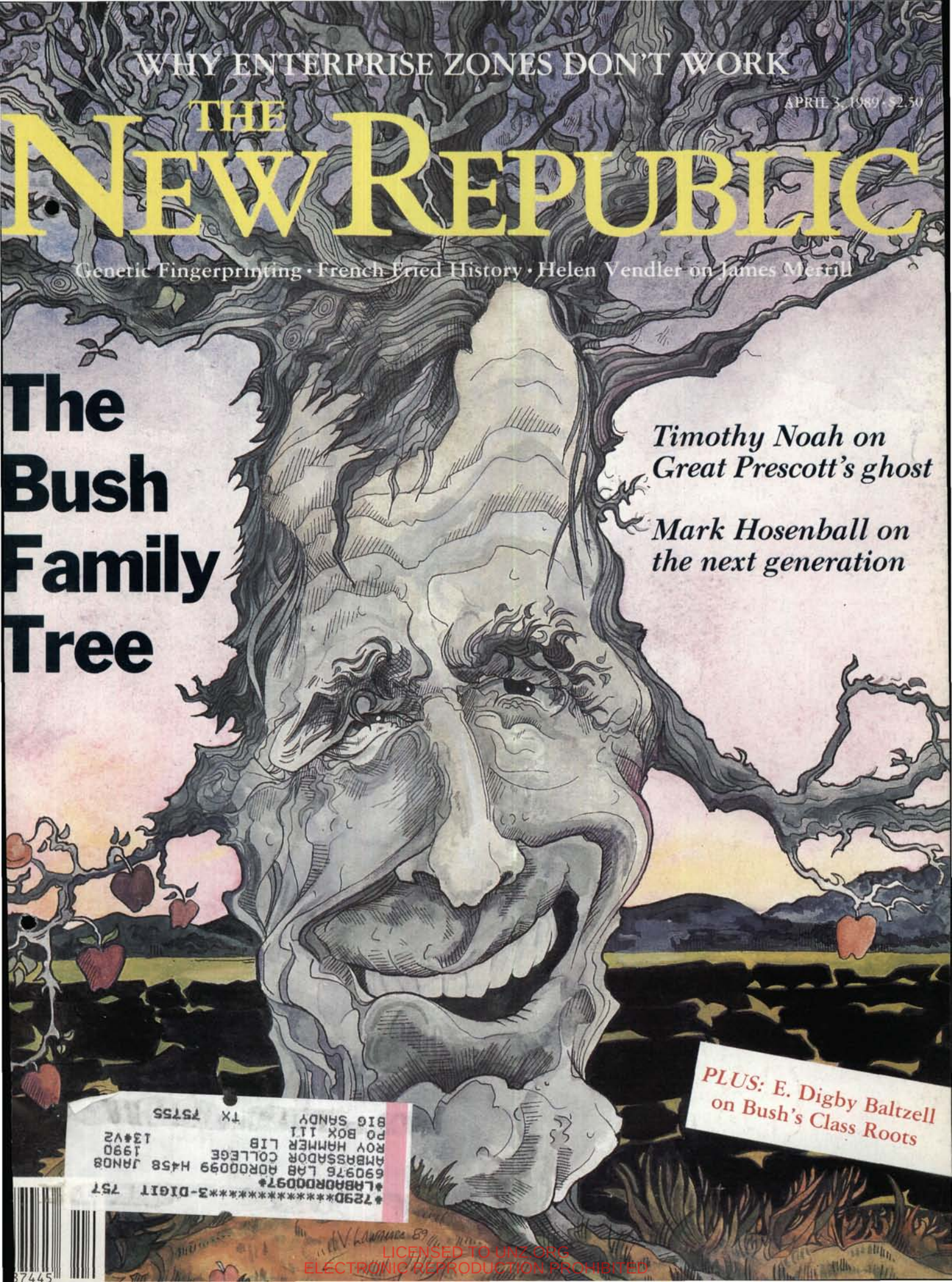

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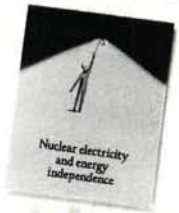


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A Weekly Journal of Opinion

APRIL 3, 1989

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 3,872

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 200, Number 14, Issue 3,872, April 3, 1989. (Printed in the U.S. on March 15, 1989.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 9 & 16, July 17 & 24, Aug. 7 & 14, and Sept. 18 & 25, 1989) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $56; foreign, $81; Canada, $70. Back issues, $3.00 (includes postage & handling). ©1989 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-525-0643.



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## FROM WASHINGTON

# Hit the road, Jack

Here's some common ground between Jesse Jackson and the Democratic Party: they both have a Jesse Jackson problem.

The party's Jackson problem is chronic and obvious. Jackson's Jackson problem is acute and not so obvious. Its symptoms include a compulsion to thrash around in the mud of Chicago politics, an inability to decide between joining the Democratic Party and merely using it, and an unwillingness to grasp the political opportunity of a lifetime. The total effect combines megalomania with smallness of vision.

Jackson says he has "not yet made the decision to run for president in 1992," which is like the sun saying it has not yet made the decision to rise tomorrow. The inevitable will be followed by the predictable:

Early in 1991, Jackson makes an "exploratory" swing. Friendly crowds chant, "Run, Jesse, run." He runs. In the primaries he gets as many votes as he did in 1988, maybe a few more, but rules changes adopted since then give him a larger bloc of delegates. He has no chance of nomination but carries the fight to the convention anyway. The "What does Jesse want?" articles start coming out. Jackson sulks, murmurs about racism, complains that the rules are still unfair. He declares that because he came in second, he has "earned" the second spot on the ticket. The nominee decides otherwise—being careful, however, to telephone Jackson promptly with the bad news. After more tension, Jackson gets the spotlight at the convention, makes the big speech, and is promised a plane and a budget for the fall campaign. Keeping him happy absorbs large quantities of the nominee's time.

This dreary, inexorable, no-longer-novel scenario is of course the party's problem, but it is also Jackson's. His act has worn thin. He is repeating himself on a grand scale.

It is not only the prospect of a third Jackson candidacy (and a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, after which Jackson will still be younger than George Bush is now) that tries the patience of Democratic Party professionals. Particularly in the wake of the Democratic Senate's disciplined performance in the John Tower confirmation fight, party loyalty is enjoying something of a vogue among Democrats. Jackson has—and is—a problem in this area.

Jackson has always maintained that he has done more for the party than the party has done for him, pointing to the masses of new voters he has brought into the ranks. A Census Bureau study published last week puts this claim in doubt. It shows a decline of four percentage points in black turnout from 1984 to 1988, double the drop among whites. Some of this can be attributed to the fact that for blacks Reagan vs. Mondale was a starker choice than Bush vs. Dukakis. But some, surely, was due to Jackson and his alienating drama of wounded pride.

Party loyalty counts at the presidential level. Episodes like Jackson's recent chummy meeting with Bush are relatively trivial at this point in the quadrennial cycle, though the meeting was a reminder of Jackson's periodic willingness to let Republicans use him for their own purposes. More serious is the Chicago imbroglio.

The city of the big shoulders is also the city of the sharp elbows. Chicago's municipal politics is a wildly tangled web of personal and tribal loyalties and betrayals, a web in which Jesse Jackson is not the spider—he's just one of the flies.

The story so far: when Mayor Harold Washington died at the end of 1987, white aldermen, with the help of a few blacks, chose Eugene Sawyer over Timothy Evans, whom Jackson favored, to serve pending a special election this year. In the Democratic primary, held on February 28, Jackson vigorously supported Sawyer over Richard M. (Richie) Daley, son of the late, legendary Richard J. Daley. Despite Jackson's urgings, Evans refused to endorse Sawyer, deciding instead to run independently in the April 4 general election as the candidate of the "Harold Washington Party." Daley won the primary handily. Sawyer is staying neutral. Democratic National Committee Chairman Ron Brown, who was Jackson's convention manager last year, is supporting Daley. And Jackson is supporting Evans. All clear?

Just about every Chicago Democrat has bolted the party at one time or another, and if Jackson were primarily a local politician, his decision to oppose the duly nominated candidate of his party might conceivably make sense. It would certainly make sense if Daley had run a racist campaign, but he didn't. On the

*continued on page 42*

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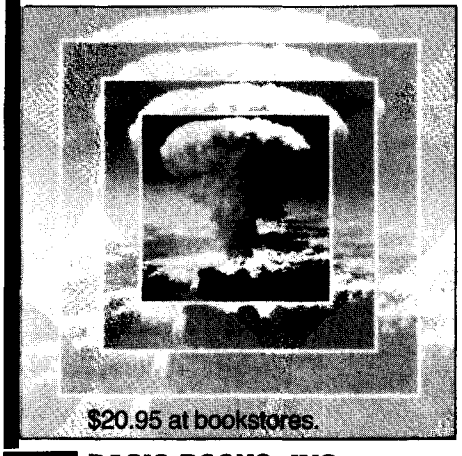


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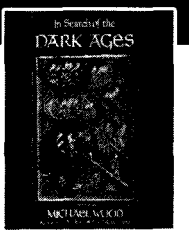


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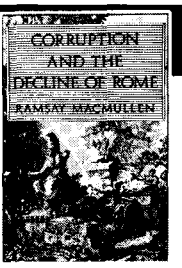


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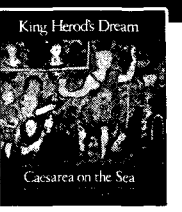


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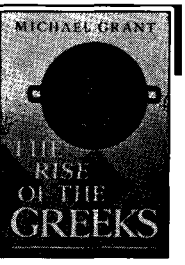


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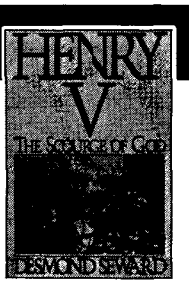


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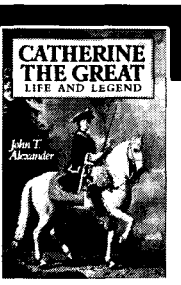


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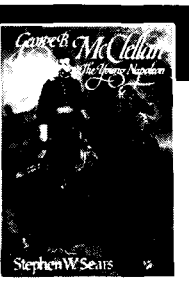


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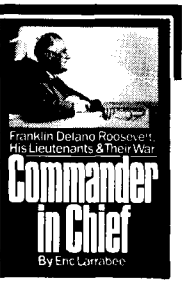


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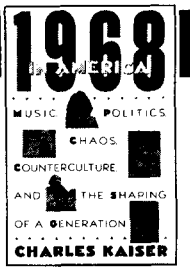


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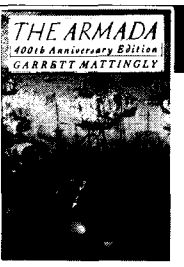


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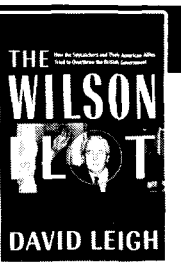


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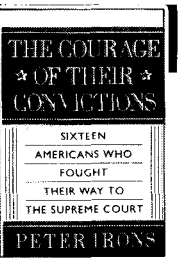


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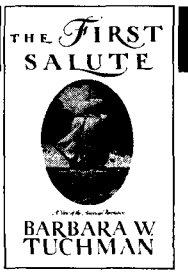


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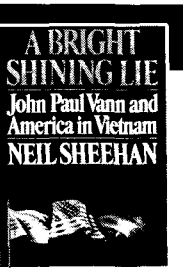


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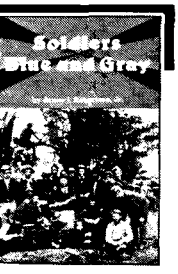


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# CORRESPONDENCE

## Who Said Paranoid?

**To the editors:**

TRB's "He's Back" (February 27), on the recently published compilation of memos by President Nixon and his staff, was the most balanced article yet to appear, and we appreciated it. But what I cannot understand is the notion, which TRB perpetuates, that RN was "paranoid" about the press being against him. On John McLaughlin's show in February panelists as disparate as Jack Germond and your own Fred Barnes agreed that if the media didn't like Jim Baker as well as they do, he would have been given a much harder time over his bank stock. Well, if the media as an institution can "like" somebody, in the secretary's case because he has a reputation for giving them what they want, why can't they "dislike" somebody such as Richard Nixon, who's spent 40 years giving them precisely what they deserve?

JOHN H. TAYLOR
*Assistant to President Nixon*
*Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey*

## Prescribed Differences

**To the editors:**

Jerome Groopman's "Rx For The FDA" (February 13) could create the false impression that a quick fix at the FDA may release a slew of new cures. When describing the clinical trial phases, he is perhaps more accurately discussing drug candidates for treating only AIDS specifically. For example, he says phase I generally introduces the drug candidate in patients with an advanced form of the disease who have exhausted other options. But phase I trials are generally conducted with healthy volunteers who are often paid to take low doses of a drug candidate. Looking at the regulatory system as it responds to AIDS treatments alone can distort the general picture of pharmaceutical development.

This article may also leave the impression that behind the FDA "log jam" is a potential flood of AIDS cures. The reality is that there are too few promising drug candidates for AIDS victims, and the FDA does not create that reality. The FDA recently announced it will allow greater access to aerosol pentamidine despite a lack of controlled clinical trials, indicating that it will be more flexible with promising drug candidates. Still, extrapolating from aerosol pentamidine to the whole system of drug development is likely to confuse a public that does not understand the regulatory system.

JONATHAN C. PECK
*Alexandria, Virginia*

**Jerome Groopman replies:**

The phases of drug development for AIDS are quite similar to those for other major diseases. Chemotherapy drugs for malignancy are developed first in individuals who have generally exhausted other treatment options, not in healthy volunteers. Looking at the regulatory system as it responds to AIDS does not "distort" pharmaceutical development in general. Indeed, the response to AIDS is similar to that for cancer, degenerative neurological disorders, and other fatal maladies. The development of drugs for these illnesses are my subject, not drugs first tested in healthy volunteers.

I did not state that the FDA created a "log jam." I pointed out that drugs that have a scientific basis for development are generally inaccessible to the majority of those with AIDS. The reality does not concern "too few drug candidates" but rather too few candidates for the drug.

I applaud the FDA's move to allow greater access to certain therapies, and agree that the regulatory system is important in protecting the public from quackery and unforeseen toxicities. On the other hand, the system is too rigid and could greatly increase the amount of data developed on new drugs if it were rationally restructured.

## At A Loss For Words

**To the editors:**

I like stumbling across new words as much as the next autodidact. But fair's fair. At least give me words that I can look up in my Random House Unabridged or Oxford English Dictionaries. Neither includes the twice-used *ekphrasis* ("Yuppies Along the Seine" by Roger Shattuck, February 20). Cursing the author for his pedantry, I moved on to the next article ("Chekhov in Chicago" by Sven Birkerts), only to meet the equally enigmatic *sprezzatura*. Even Random House's Italian-English dictionary isn't aware of this word.

When a writer in a magazine that is not a trade journal uses jargon whose meaning the general reader cannot discover with modest effort, he leaves himself wide open to the charge of contempt for that reader. Or has William F. Buckley taken on editorial duties at THE NEW REPUBLIC?

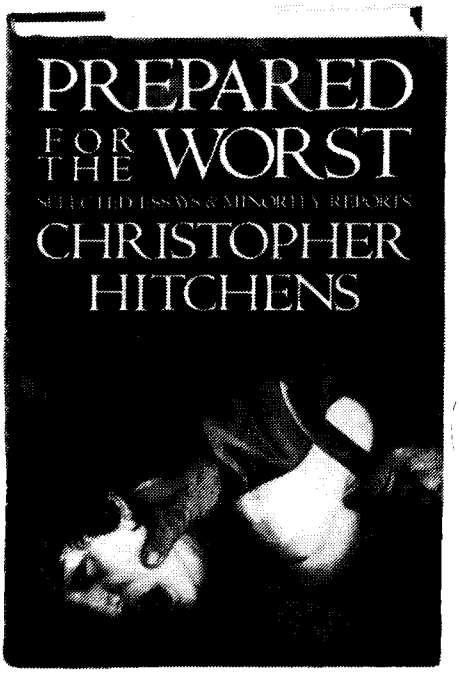
HASKELL BARKIN
*Studio City, California*

*continued on page 42*

"A breath of Tom Paine for our time."
—OLIVER STONE

"[Hitchens] is the nearest thing to a journalistic one-man band since I.F. Stone... He also has the makings of a first-rate essayist in the manner of George Orwell... He is better than we deserve, but he is just what we need."
—*THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER*

"He has no, absolutely *no* tolerance for bullshit—which may make him unpopular with politicians, but makes him an unalloyed pleasure to read."
—*THE VILLAGE VOICE*

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
APRIL 3, 1989

# STOP POL POT

Since World War II, it has practically been a tenet of America's civic religion that our government should take every possible step to prevent another Hitler from rising to power anywhere, to rescue his intended victims as we failed to rescue the Jews, and even to intervene militarily to stop another Holocaust as we failed to bomb the railroads to Auschwitz.

Sounds great. But we were put to the test in 1975 in Cambodia, and we failed. Pol Pot came to power and unleashed another Holocaust. His Khmer Rouge army massacred a million people, a third of the population. With a crazed ideology that demanded the almost total destruction of past Khmer civilization, Pol Pot's soldiers killed every high school or college graduate, civil servant, teacher, and priest they could find. For a person to own eyeglasses or a book was to be labeled as an intellectual—the punishment for which was being clubbed to death. As recounted on a recent NBC documentary, Khmer Rouge soldiers lined up all the young women in one village, singled out the prettiest, and cut off her breasts, forcing villagers at gunpoint to watch her bleed to death.

As reports of the horrors began to trickle in from refugees, they were widely denied or ignored in the United States. Finally, they were accepted, but they then became the occasion not for action of any kind, but for ideological recriminations. The right said this wouldn't have happened if the left had not helped the Communists triumph in Indochina. The left said this wouldn't have happened if the United States had stayed out of Indochina in the first place. The Khmer Rouge catastrophe ended only in 1979 with an invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam—not a mercy mission, but an act of imperialism leading to yet other atrocities, including summary executions, mass jailings, and forced labor.

Now, it appears, the civilized world will be put to the test yet again. Vietnam has announced that it will pull its occupying army out of Cambodia—by the end of this year if an agreement can be worked out among Cambodia's warring factions, by the end of next year if no agreement is reached. This is no act of conscience. Vietnam is withdrawing under pressure from its sponsor, the Soviet Union, which wants to improve relations with Vietnam's enemy, China. Also, Vietnam has found occupation of Cambodia to be a ponderous burden on its decrepit Marxist economy.

When Vietnam withdraws, who will rule Cambodia? The danger is that the Khmer Rouge will come back. The Khmer Rouge assures the world that this isn't cause for concern—that Pol Pot is in retirement and it has undergone reforms that make atrocities like those of the past impossible in the future. However, practically every journalist, human rights group, and Western government official knowledgeable on the subject regards this as a lie. They report that refugee camps in Thailand under Khmer Rouge control are run as virtual slave plantations: malcontents are denied food and water, tortured, or killed; able-bodied young men and women are impressed to fight as guerrillas inside Cambodia, and the less able-bodied are forced to walk through mine fields ahead of Khmer Rouge soldiers. Though he has not been seen in public, Pol Pot is believed to be still in command of the Khmer Rouge force, which has around 30,000 fighters, making it the largest of the three anti-Vietnamese resistance groups. China, compiling a record of monstrous cynicism, backed Pol Pot in his bloody days in power, supplied him through his days of resistance, and has just finished filling up his weapons stockpile to make the Khmer Rouge the best equipped of the resistance forces.

Under legislation sponsored by Democratic Representative Stephen Solarz—one of the first American officials to bring Cambodian atrocities to public attention in the 1970s—the United States has been supplying non-lethal aid ($5 million worth this year) to two democratic resistance groups: the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), headed by former Cambodian prime minister Son Sann, with about 10,000 troops; and the Sihanoukist National Army (ANS), headed by former Cambodian ruler Prince Norodom Sihanouk, with somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000 troops. Riven by dissension and indiscipline, the KPNLF is a declining force, while the ANS is growing. Its military commander and Sihanouk's son, Norodom Ranariddh, said on March 14 during a trip to Washington that the ANS could be up to 30,000 men by the end of this year. He was seeking guns and ammunition from the United States to balance the power of the Communist forces in Cambodia.

The fourth player in Cambodia's drama is the



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Vietnamese-installed People's Republic of Kampuchea, nominally headed by President Heng Samrin but actually run by 37-year-old Prime Minister Hun Sen, who's lately become the darling of Western media visitors. Recent reports in the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe* and on National Public Radio tell of plentiful vegetables in the markets, plans for *perestroika*-style reforms of the economy, and the political rehabilitation of surviving pre-Khmer Rouge intellectuals. These reports all conclude—explicitly or implicitly—that Hun Sen deserves American political support because he is the only alternative to the return of the Khmer Rouge.

Things may come to that, and certainly the prospect of a Vietnam-dominated Cambodia is less troubling, in geopolitical terms, than it was before the Soviet Union began showing signs of scaling down its global ambitions. But the U.S. should not condemn Cambodia to live under a foreign-dominated Communist dictatorship until it has tried to bring about a better alternative: a freely elected democracy bolstered by international guarantees and peacekeeping forces. This is the alternative being worked for by Solarz and the Bush administration, and it is the solution favored by such Cambodia experts as David Hawk, director both of the Cambodia Documentation Commission and of Amnesty International.

Producing a democratic outcome in Cambodia will involve, first of all, giving arms to Sihanouk to enhance his fighting ability and his bargaining power. It will also involve persuading China to cut off arms aid to the Khmer Rouge and to remove Pol Pot and his henchmen from command; persuading the Soviet Union to induce Vietnam to pressure Hun Sen into good-faith talks with Sihanouk; persuading Thailand to open Khmer Rouge-dominated refugee camps and allow their captives to relocate; organizing international supervisory machinery (including a peacekeeping force that is well equipped and capable of fighting) to oversee elections and the transfer of power to a new regime; and establishing an international (possibly French-Japanese-American) aid program to rebuild a ravaged country.

Obviously, that's an ambitious agenda. But in some ways the present constellation of international forces is auspicious. China says it is willing to cut off aid to the Khmer Rouge when Vietnamese troops are actually out. The Soviet Union and China are about to have a summit meeting; a Sihanouk-dominated Cambodia could be a graceful compromise between their opposing interests. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, including Thailand, already favors an interim government and elections as the best solution for Cambodia.

What the United States has to do is push. President Bush did some pushing on his visit to China, but the evidence of true U.S. determination will be willingness to supply military aid to the non-Communist forces in Cambodia, as we did to the anti-Communists in Afghanistan. In the present climate of global détente, China, the Soviet Union, and the United States should be able to come to peaceful terms about regional conflicts, and we hope that any arms provided to Sihanouk won't have to be used; but even in the age of Gorbachev, the capability to use force is a powerful and sometimes indispensable negotiating tool. Whether the Bush administration will recognize this and act on it is unclear. Some administration officials favor providing military aid, but others fear


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that the U.S. public is still too beset by post-Vietnam syndrome to get involved in another mess in Indochina.

In the end, it may be that an agreement can't be worked out. Sihanouk, for example, has wavered in and out of alliance with the Khmer Rouge and may have lost so much credibility that, even with U.S. arms, he can't attract large-scale support. It may be necessary to side with Hun Sen as the only means to thwart the return of the Khmer Rouge. This is not a desirable solution, however. Hun Sen himself was once a Khmer Rouge company commander; he defected to Vietnam only when he was about to be purged. He has lately improved Cambodia's human rights performance, but during his rule various human rights groups have reported widespread use of torture and forced labor and denial of free speech. If the alternative is Pol Pot, Hun Sen is surely the lesser of evils, and if political circumstances force us to choose between the two, we'll take what we can get. But it is likely to be more than a year before Vietnamese forces actually leave Cambodia, and during that time we should try to avert such an unpleasant choice. The civilized world should do right by the Cambodian people, and give the Soviets and the Chinese a chance to prove that they're civilized, too.

# NOTEBOOK

TAIL-GUNNER DAN: Vice President Dan Quayle (still sounds a little weird, doesn't it?) seems to be warming to the role of Bad Cop to President Bush's Good Cop. After the John Tower appointment went down in flames, Bush kept his chin up and called for bipartisan cooperation, while Quayle went out and accused the Democrats of McCarthyism. Lots of people have commented on the offensiveness of this charge, but less has been made of its absurdity. It is true that condemning someone on the basis of hearsay—which definitely went on during the Tower affair—is one of the characteristics of McCarthyism, but it isn't even close to being the defining characteristic. The features of McCarthyism that earned it a label of its own were: (1) impugning the patriotism (not the sobriety or marital fidelity) of the victim; (2) thereby inhibiting political discourse (not drinking or philandering) through intimidation not just of the victim, but of other like-minded people. The charges against Tower possess neither of these crucial ingredients. Similarly, last fall, when people in the Bush campaign encouraged groundless rumors that Michael Dukakis was mentally unstable, they couldn't rightly be accused of McCarthyism. As was noted at the time, what *did* possess the two hallmarks of McCarthyism, if only in small degree, were the aspersions cast by the Bush campaign on Dukakis's patriotism, and the patriotism of all "card-carrying" civil libertarians. Speaking of the '88 campaign: Quayle's outburst about McCarthyism was reminiscent, in its simplemindedness, of a "bad cop" performance he turned in last summer. While Bush was saying statesmanlike things about Mikhail Gorbachev, Quayle dismissed Gorbachev's reforms as Stalinism in disguise—an analysis that, shall we say, lacked nuance. Maybe it's natural that Quayle, after being so widely dismissed as a lightweight, should try to make brash pronouncements that seem to establish his autonomy and audacity. But this tactic would be more effective if he could manage to pursue it without sounding like an idiot.

GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS: Everyone's wondering whether the Democrats, having prevented a womanizing lush of questionable ethical fiber (or was that *former* womanizing lush?) from becoming secretary of defense, will get their comeuppance when the House Ethics Committee—half Democrats, half Republicans, remember—passes judgment on Jim Wright. Depends on what you mean by comeuppance. One could argue that damning Wright so thoroughly as to make his continued service as Speaker of the House untenable would be a blessing for the Democratic Party. In fact, we've made that case (see "Albatross," TNR, June 20, 1988). The case has also been made in our pages that Majority Leader Tom Foley would make a great replacement. (See "Friendly Foley" by Ari Posner, TNR, August 8 & 15, 1988.) Go ahead, Newt Gingrich: make our day.

DIVERSIFIED PORTFOLIO:

**CIA director says he expects Libya to begin making poison gas soon**

—*Baltimore Sun*, March 2

**LIBYANS REPORTED TO OPT FOR DRUGS**

**U.S. Thinks Qaddafi Prefers to Convert Gas Factory to Make Pharmaceuticals**

—*New York Times*, same day

(thanks to James Munsey, Bryantown, Maryland)

ORWELL STREET JOURNAL

By CHARLOTTE LOW ALLEN

To paraphrase George Orwell, many causes are unpopular, but some causes are more popularly unpopular than others.

By DIANE TRACY
*Staff Reporter of* THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

To paraphrase George Orwell, all animals are equal, but some farm animals in Vermont are more equal than others.

—*Wall Street Journal*, March 7

(thanks to Mark Halperin, New York, New York)

KILLER GRAPES: The Bush administration has just told terrorists: forget hard jobs like seizing embassies and hijacking airplanes; you can bring down a government with much less sweat. Somebody—rightists and leftists both have motives—put a pinch of cyanide into some Chilean grapes bound for America and made a phone call. When the U.S. government found *two* grapes containing a non-lethal amount of cyanide, it panicked and detained all Chilean fruit imports at U.S. ports, encouraging a similar panic by supermarkets and consumers. Other countries also panicked, and Chile's second-largest export industry is now threatened with



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collapse—and with it the whole, already burdened, Chilean economy. And all this just when the country appears to be moving from right-wing dictatorship to democracy. The ban was imposed by FDA commissioner Frank Young, who said he just couldn't let the death of a few Americans "be on my conscience." What about the damage done to an entire nation, including the deaths that might follow from insurrection? Being in charge means weighing risks and making tough calls. In this case the risk was roughly zero, but let's give Young the benefit of the doubt and suppose an American consumer or two would have died. A couple of dead Americans would be an unfortunate but fair price to pay right now—not just to give democracy a chance in Chile, but to head off the countless replays of this express-line terrorism that are now almost inevitable.

**POSTCARD IDAHO**

# NAZI RETREAT

*By Bruce Reed*

North Idaho would be a nice place to bring your next convention. Nestled in the foothills of the Rockies near the Canadian border, the resort town of Coeur d'Alene lures tourists with skiing, hiking, sailing, and a new $60 million hotel on a lake 25 miles long. The "City by the Lake" has something for everyone. In fact, Coeur d'Alene will host what is being billed as the first national skinhead convention this April, on the 100th anniversary of Hitler's birth.

The angry white youth in America's fastest-growing hate group are coming to Idaho to meet the Rev. Richard Butler, who heads the local Aryan Nations Church. Butler preaches a redneck religion called Identity, which claims white Anglo-Saxons as God's chosen people and America as their promised land. Butler's annual Aryan workshops are a leading stop on the goose-step circuit. At past conventions, budding Nazis have watched hate videos, listened to sermons on the "cesspool of Jewry," and networked with others of their ilk. Some of Butler's followers went on to form The Order, a terrorist group that tried to take over the Pacific Northwest. One Butler acolyte is believed to have murdered Denver talk-show host Alan Berg. Another bombed a federal office building, a hardware store, and a fast-food restaurant in Coeur d'Alene.

But success has its downside: much of Butler's flock is now in prison. And he's had trouble filling the vacancies. According to the Anti-Defamation League, hard-core neo-Nazi membership has dwindled from 1,200 to 400 in the past decade. That's where the skinheads come in. The number of racist skinheads is 3,000 and growing, according to the ADL. So white supremacist leaders like Butler are reaching out to forge coalitions.

Skinheads have been linked to at least four murders and two-thirds of all racial assaults in the last year. They began to appear a decade ago in working-class British neighborhoods, and now their close-cropped hair, swastika tattoos, and heavy leather boots can be seen in almost any region of the United States. Not all skinheads are racist, and some complain that the Nazi connection is giving them a bad name. But gangs like the Brew City Skins and the Minneapolis Baldies prowl the streets preying on gays, blacks, the homeless, and Jews.

That is not what they'll find in Coeur d'Alene. Here the black population is less than one-tenth of one percent. And as one local put it, "There isn't any Jew in the world who would come to Idaho now." But Coeur d'Alene hasn't been a breeding ground for racists either. Butler has won only a handful of local converts since he moved up from California in 1973. Most of his followers, like the skinheads, come from out of town.

What's put the town on the map has been the Reverend's relentless rabble-rousing and hunger for publicity. Several years ago, he allegedly blew up his own church so he could claim the Jewish Defense League was out to get him. (His congregation these days consists of a prison mailing list and Aryan Nations Network, a computer bulletin board.) Thanks to a rash of neo-Nazi bombings, Coeur d'Alene was one of three cities (the other two were Miami and Washington) cited in a recent Associated Press wrap-up story on terrorist incidents in the United States since 1983.

The Rev. Butler's latest quest for national attention may get an unwitting boost from the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Bowing to vocal supporters in the region, Jackson endorsed plans for a counterdemonstration by Marxists, gay rights activists, and the Rainbow Coalition. Organizers expect to draw 20,000 protesters, which would double Coeur d'Alene's population overnight. Although the county sheriff doubts the town "will see numbers anything like that," residents are no longer sure which invasion to fear more. Busloads of outsiders will increase the threat of confrontation and guarantee another spate of home-of-the-Nazis press.

Town leaders have been Skokied before. Last year authorities denied the Aryans a permit for cross burning; the Nazis strung their cross with Christmas lights instead. When Butler threatened to lead a "Preserve Our White Heritage" parade this year, the city decided to close down main street for repairs. Now he may march the skinheads in front of the big tourist hotel instead.

In the past, a local human relations task force has sponsored civil rights seminars to protest the Aryan presence. This year it is also asking residents to tie orange ribbons to every available bush, fence, and tree. According to North Idaho College professor Tony Stewart, a task force leader, orange symbolizes courage and is highly visible.

"If you were a skinhead, would that make much of an impression?" said Lisa Anderson, a former Jackson delegate who is organizing the protest march. Anderson will lead the protesters down a bike path from the world's first log-cabin McDonald's, past the K-Mart, to a minimall a few miles from Butler's church. "We



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wouldn't walk up to the gates of their compound. That would be suicidal," she says. "But they will hear our feet—even if they're out there shooting off their rifles."

Butler may be the only person in Coeur d'Alene who isn't worrying about violence. His followers won't lay a hand on protesters from "the ghettos" of Seattle and San Francisco, he says. "We're going to stay away from them. Those are the people most likely to carry AIDS." The Reverend's more immediate concern is making sure enough skinheads show up. He once talked of drawing at least 200; now he hopes for 50.

Some may have been kept away by the supremacist Metzger family of Napa County, California. Tom Metzger is a former Klansman who won a Democratic primary for Congress in 1980, and whose son helped start the fight that broke Geraldo Rivera's nose. Metzger believes hate should be fun. In early March father and son tried to stage an "Aryan Woodstock" with skinhead bands, but could not get a permit. The Metzgers turned down Butler's invitation. "I don't think skinheads are going to like to sit on a hard bench and listen to a preacher," Tom Metzger says. "For a skinhead to go a whole weekend without a beer is unthinkable."

The Rev. Butler expects big things to come from what he calls "the first church outing of Aryan youth." The election of David Duke in Louisiana was "just a touch of what you're going to see," he warns. "Skinhead leaders are going to take over the racial regeneration of our nation. They're the ability of our race to live—or our race will die." White youths once led us in war, Butler says; now immigration and affirmative action mean they can't even find jobs. Why not rescue them from the melting pot with a weekend in God's country? "There's white people here," he says. "That's why I'm here."

Several courageous north Idaho citizens have denounced Butler over the years. But neo-Nazis planted a pipe bomb in one outspoken critic's house. And most people would rather ignore Butler altogether. "Burying our heads in the sand doesn't make it go away, but making noise just plays into their hands," says the mayor of a neighboring village.

Only one man in town has the clout to take on Butler: Duane Hagadone, a homegrown millionaire who owns the resort, the restaurants, the greyhound racetrack, the radio station, most of the lakefront property, and the daily newspaper. But with so much riding on the City by the Lake, Hagadone is reluctant to do anything that might scare off more tourists. "If you read the Coeur d'Alene Press," says Norm Gissel, the human relations task force president, "you wouldn't know there were any Nazis within 500 miles."

Such a sleepy town might seem a strange spot for racist rush week. But the isolation and sheer conventionality of the place may be what enables the neo-Nazis to stay. Much as they dislike his message, many residents share one thing with Richard Butler: like him, they came to Coeur d'Alene to get away from it all. And like him, they never dreamed they might bring it all with them.

BRUCE REED, a native of north Idaho, is a speechwriter for Senator Al Gore.

**Ron Brown, take note.**

# END OF THE RAINBOW

*By Ruy A. Teixeira*

To hear some Democrats tell it, the lessons of the 1988 presidential campaign can be boiled down to a couple of ifs: "if only more blacks/Hispanics/poor people had been registered, if only their turnout had not been so low, then we could have won the 1988 election." Jesse Jackson is the leading proponent of this view. He has criticized the Democratic Party's strategy of targeting white swing voters (especially "Reagan Democrats") and argued that the Democrats' loss was due to their failure to secure their natural political base. By "natural political base," of course, he means mainly the rainbow coalition of minorities and lower-income whites.

Several postelection studies seem to support his view. The Joint Center for Political Studies issued a report claiming that seven states with 146 electoral votes could have gone Democratic if blacks had turned out in "large numbers." A recent study by the Southern Regional Council states that with only a slight increase in white support for the Democrats in the South, raising black/Hispanic turnout to the level of whites would have enabled the Democrats to win a majority of states in the region.

So in the eyes of Jackson and his supporters, the task facing Ron Brown, the newly elected chairman of the Democratic Party, seems straightforward. Just change the party's message to lure more blacks and other reliable Democratic supporters back to the polls, and the White House will be back in Democratic hands. There's one problem with this strategy: it won't work. A close look at the 1988 election results shows that even very large increases in turnout among blacks, Hispanics, and the poor would have left Michael Dukakis still far behind George Bush.

Using final exit poll data from a CBS/*New York Times* survey and final overall turnout figures, I was able to estimate turnout rates by race and by different income groups. In terms of race, whites had the highest estimated turnout, at about 52 percent, while blacks were at 46 percent and Hispanics at 23 percent. This compares to a turnout of about 50 percent for the population as a whole.

In terms of income, the high turnout groups were those with $25,000 or more in family income: 64 percent for those between $25,000 and $35,000, and 57 percent each for those between $35,000 and $50,000 and those over $50,000. The low turnout groups were those with under $25,000 in family income: 46 percent for those between $12,500 and $25,000, and only 31 percent for the poor, those under $12,500.



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So this much can be said in support of the "rainbow strategy" advocates: there *were* substantial differences in turnout among different racial and income groups, and the low turnout groups are those that generally vote Democratic. Blacks, for example, voted about 85 percent for Dukakis, while Hispanics cast 69 percent of their ballots for him, and the poor, 62 percent.

But the real question is how many additional votes the Democrats would have gained if these groups had voted in greater numbers. First, look at this from the standpoint of blacks, the focal point of Jackson's get-out-the-vote effort in 1988. (I assume throughout this analysis that new voters from a given group would have voted Democratic at about the same rate as group members who did vote.) If black turnout had matched that of whites, the net Democratic gain would have been about 865,000 votes. If black turnout had somehow been ten points higher than whites, the Democratic gain would have came to about 2,351,000 votes. That's way shy of the more than seven million votes Dukakis would have needed to win the election.

The story is similar for Hispanics. Even if Hispanic turnout had exceeded white turnout by ten points, the Democrats would have gained only 1,995,000 votes. And if both Hispanics *and* blacks had voted at rates ten points higher than whites, the overall gain for the Democrats, 4,346,000 votes, would not have been enough.

It could still be argued that the Democratic turnout problem was not a matter of race so much as economic class. Only an estimated 31 percent of poor people voted in the 1988 election, but they voted for the Democratic ticket at a 62 percent rate. What if the poor had turned out at higher levels?

If turnout among those with less than $12,500 in family income had been 50 percent, the same as among the general population, the Democrats would have netted about 1,903,000 voters. If poor turnout had matched rich turnout (where "rich" is defined as more than $50,000 in family income), the net gain would have been 2,576,000 votes. Finally, if some sort of unprecedented poor people's mobilization had taken place and the poor had managed to turn out at a level ten points higher than the rich, the Democrats would have gained about 3,559,000 voters, not enough, by itself, to make the difference.

But what about the entire rainbow coalition—blacks, Hispanics, and poor people of all colors? Since a substantial fraction of blacks and Hispanics are poor, any attempt to calculate the figure for the entire rainbow coalition must eliminate double-counting. The simplest approach is to add up the votes of blacks, Hispanics, and poor whites. Assuming the highest turnout scenarios (e.g., for blacks and Hispanics, ten points higher than whites; for poor whites, ten points higher than the rich) that comes out to 5,150,000 votes—short of the seven million needed.

The results seem clear enough. However, it could still be argued that the Electoral College, by magnifying the results in a few key states, could magnify the influence of the rainbow coalition. Jackson, for example, has claimed that relatively modest increases in black registration and turnout in 11 key states would have won the election for Dukakis.

Attempts to obtain the report upon which this claim is based have not been successful. So I tested the theory myself by looking at every state that Bush won and estimating the state-level effects of not only increased black turnout, but increased turnout among Hispanics and the white poor. Unfortunately for Jackson, the numbers just don't add up. With a "modest" five percent increase in black turnout, not one state would have switched from the Bush to the Dukakis column. With a ten point increase in black turnout in every state that Bush won, only two states would have switched: Maryland and Illinois, for a total of 34 electoral votes. Finally, I looked at the effects of a 20 point increase in black turnout, far beyond the realm of a "modest" increase, but even here there is little additional effect: only Pennsylvania is added to the other two states. The result would be a still-lopsided Dukakis loss of 367-171.

Of course, rainbow coalition devotees could go beyond Jackson's claims and maintain that, if Hispanics and the white poor had been mobilized at the levels just envisioned for blacks, and this change were mediated by the Electoral College, the results would be quite different. But increasing Hispanic and white poor turnout by 20 points adds only California to the Democratic column, largely because of the state's Hispanic population and the relative closeness of the election there.

In sum, if turnout among blacks, Hispanics, and the white poor had *all* been 20 points higher in every state Bush won—a Rainbow Coalition organizer's dream come true—Dukakis would still have lost the 1988 election 320-218 in the Electoral College. Since these 20 point turnout increases would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve (especially without a Republican countermobilization), and wouldn't work anyway, it looks like the rainbow strategy is due for some serious rethinking.

Now, none of this is to say that mobilizing nonvoters could not *technically* have won the election for the Democrats. For example, if every black in the United States had voted in 1988, Dukakis would probably have won. Or if turnout among the poor had been a mere 20 points higher, but every one of these additional poor people had voted Democratic, this, too, would have been enough to swing the election. But those scenarios are the stuff of political science fiction.

However, as silly as they seem, these scenarios do illustrate an important point. When people say "turnout is the solution," they are usually basing their assessment on just such fantasies. That is, they envision preposterously high turnout increases for a group, or preposterously high voting rates for their candidate among new voters, or both. On close inspection, for example, that turns out to be the case for the report of the Joint Center for Political Studies. Its study gives Dukakis 146 more electoral votes by assuming a turnout rate among blacks of 68 percent—18 percent higher than the population as a whole—and by assuming that 100 percent of these voters would cast their ballots for Dukakis.

At least on this issue, then, the road forward for Ron



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Brown should be fairly clear. Turnout of the "usual suspects" will not win elections for the Democrats. Brown and his party will have to range further afield, to those broad sectors of the electorate whose members remain unconvinced that Democrats have the solutions to their problems.

RUY A. TEIXEIRA is a senior analyst at Abt Associates and author of *Why Americans Don't Vote*.

## SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

# MISPRINT

*By Mark Thompson*

A year ago a jury in Orlando, Florida, sentenced Tommy Lee Andrews to 22 years in prison after convicting him of rape on the strength of a kind of evidence seen only once or twice before in a U.S. court: "genetic fingerprints." Samples of DNA from semen recovered after the crime matched samples of DNA from Andrews's blood. The genetic fingerprints, said the state prosecutor, were "probably the sole reason we convicted him."

Last October genetic fingerprints helped a jury in New York City decide the fate of Victor Lopez, another accused rapist. The genetic evidence "was very conclusive the way the experts explained it," one juror said after the conviction. "You can't really argue with science," observed another.

In the two years since it was imported from England, genetic fingerprinting has figured in several dozen criminal trials. It has been used as an investigative tool in hundreds of other criminal and paternity cases. And its use is growing fast, for understandable reasons: genetic fingerprinting is a prosecutor's (and some innocent defendants') dream. Investigators can compare a suspect's DNA "print" with the print found in a shred of human tissue or strand of hair or fluid stain found at the scene of the crime.

If the two match, the rest is easy. Scientists from one of the three private genetic fingerprinting labs in the United States go to court and testify about the unlikelihood that the match could be coincidental. Officials from Lifecodes Corporation have testified that the odds are one in ten billion that samples from two different people would yield matching prints. Officials with Cellmark Diagnostics have testified that the odds of a coincidental match are one in 30 billion. Forensic Science Associates uses a technique that requires a much smaller amount of genetic material but is considerably less discriminating. Still, the odds of an erroneous match are typically quoted in the one-in-tens-of-thousands range.

It turns out that such estimates considerably exaggerate the state of the art of genetic fingerprinting. Recently the Orange County sheriff's department crime laboratory sent about 50 blood and semen samples drawn from about 20 people to each of the three labs and asked them to determine which specimens came from the same people. The results, released at a forensics conference in late February, are quite impressive, but less impressive than jurors in either of the above cases would have guessed. Cellmark was wrong on one of the 44 matches it found. Forensic Science Associates missed one out of its 50 reported matches. Lifecodes was more cautious, and offered no conclusions on about 14 of the samples, but got all 37 of its reported matches correct. All told, that's around 98 percent accuracy. Not bad. But not beyond the shadow of a reasonable doubt.

Officials with Cellmark and Forensic Science Associates blame their errors on sloppy lab work—processing a genetic sample in a centrifuge contaminated with other DNA in Cellmark's case; forgetting to put a droplet of genetic material in one test chamber in Forensic Science Associates' case. They may be right, but remember: the labs knew they were under official scrutiny when they conducted these tests. How likely is it that they're any more meticulous in the course of their actual work?

The question of whether the errors are the result of sloppiness or of limits on the labs' powers of discernment is critical. If sloppiness is the problem, then the remedy is simple: sending the tests out to two separate labs could change the odds of an incorrect match from one in 50 to one in 2,500, and sending them out to a third lab would make an incorrect match almost inconceivable. But if the level of confidence being falsely claimed by these labs is simply unattainable, given current technology, then there is no immediate fix; genetic fingerprints will, for the time being at least, have to be given less weight in court. They will have to be treated not like "fingerprints," but more like eyewitness testimony that both the rapist and the defendant were wearing an orange coat on the night of the crime.

Most people who have heard of genetic fingerprinting have no idea that the technique can go wrong. With few exceptions, press accounts have treated the claims made by the genetic fingerprinting salesmen with awe. *Time*, for example, ran its story heralding the arrival of the new forensic tool under the headline "DNA Prints: foolproof crime test." And so far no newspaper has picked up on the embarrassing results of the Orange County test.

Judges have also been wowed. After one of the first extensive hearings involving genetic fingerprinting, Joseph Harris, a county judge in Albany, New York, said he had been convinced by expert witnesses that "it is impossible under the scientific principles, technology, and procedures of DNA fingerprinting (outside of an identical twin) to get a 'false positive.' "

One reason people so readily believe the technique to be virtually infallible is that they confuse DNA itself with the "print" derived from it. While all people on earth except identical twins do presumably have unique genetic endowments, genetic fingerprints don't come even close to capturing the entire strand of DNA. The patented genetic "probes" that produce the print are designed to lock on to a few distinctive gene frag-



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ments—"alleles"—that vary in length among different people and show up at the end of the genetic fingerprinting process as a handful of dark bands on photographic film. David Hausman, head of the genetics department at MIT, acknowledged in testimony for the prosecution in the Andrews case that this handful of alleles constitutes only from 1/100,000 to 1/1,000,000 of the total genetic information in a chromosome.

That's still a lot of information—enough, by far, to reduce the chances of a mismatch to an acceptable level. But correctly reading the genetic prints turns out to be a tricky business. Aside from any laboratory mishaps that can affect the integrity of a genetic fingerprint, the bands can shift during processing, lab officials have recently acknowledged—after first denying that such a problem could occur. (The labs now say they employ safeguards to control for band shift.) And bacteria in a genetic sample can produce stray bands in a genetic print—another problem lab officials have recently acknowledged, though they insist that bacterial bands can be detected and ruled out. Finally, the crucial act of comparing prints involves a subjective judgment about whether the bands match, another opportunity for human error. Lab officials insist that it is possible to have as many as 30 billion visually distinguishable patterns of a dozen or so bands, but there is much controversy over this claim among statisticians.

There is also controversy over some of the assumptions underlying the labs' assessments: the assumption that the several alleles are statistically independent of each other, like a series of coin tosses, where the outcome of the first toss doesn't effect the probabilities for the second; and assumptions about the distribution of alleles in people nationwide. The labs base these latter assumptions on empirical research, but only one of the studies has been published so far, a study by Lifecodes involving genetic tests of 900 New Yorkers, roughly a third of whom came from each of three racial groups—blacks, Hispanics, and whites.

William Thompson, a social scientist at the University of California, Irvine, who co-authored (with molecular biologist Simon Ford) an exhaustive critique of genetic fingerprinting in the February *Virginia Law Review*, notes the role these assumptions played in a case involving a defendant in a small, predominantly black Texas town who was pinned to a rape and murder by genetic fingerprints. It is likely that the distribution of alleles among people in the town, where families have intermarried for years, is substantially narrower than distributions reported in the study of 300 black New Yorkers. But, Thompson says, "Lifecodes refused to concede that there was any problem with the frequencies. The defendant couldn't afford a population expert. So the jury got the one-in-billions-type of testimony."

Probably none of the many sources of uncertainty about genetic fingerprinting is, in itself, sufficient to undermine confidence in the technique. But Thompson and others think that together the questions cast enough doubt on the process to make the term "fingerprint," with all it implies, grossly misleading.

It's hard to find out whether they're right, because the private labs that do the fingerprinting are largely free from scrutiny. The radioactive probes that each lab has developed are patented, and the labs refuse to publish the proprietary research information that they say backs up their claims. The labs also refuse to talk about the protocols followed by their technicians. In the few cases where defense attorneys have gotten court orders permitting them to learn how a lab actually does its work, they have had to agree to keep the information to themselves.

One proposal for changing the system has been drawn up by California Attorney General John Van de Kamp. He wants to increase the government's control over genetic fingerprinting and then increase the use of it. He urges the creation of a network of regional genetic fingerprinting labs run by state and local law enforcement authorities. (After all, old-fashioned fingerprinting—the kind involving fingers—is done by the government.) The state would then amass a computerized database of genetic fingerprints of all convicted sex offenders, allowing police to search in seconds for a print matching the one taken from any biological evidence. When that system is working, rapists might as well start leaving calling cards at the scenes of their crimes.

Even those who doubt the current reliability of genetic fingerprinting admit that the technique has immense promise, and will someday—if only after technological advances—be roughly as important as Van de Kamp envisions. In the meanwhile, though, the public—especially jurors—deserve a bit more information about the process. Last July the California Association of Crime Lab Directors sent another batch of samples to the three labs. Lifecodes, the only lab that passed the first test, has returned its results and again correctly identified all the samples from which it could derive a clear print. The two other labs say they've been too burdened with criminal casework to get to the test. Thompson says: "To my mind, that's like saying I can't take the medical boards right now because I'm too busy practicing medicine."

MARK THOMPSON is a senior writer at *California Lawyer* magazine.

**What's so bad about being white and uptight?**

# BLUE-BLOOD BLUES

*By E. Digby Baltzell*

In our rootless and resentful age of increasingly classless bureaucracy, George Bush purportedly has a "class problem," which I should like to look at here from a historical perspective.

Throughout most of this so-called Century of the Common Man, the subject of class in America has had much the same closed-closet status as masturbation and



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fornication: ladies and gentlemen simply did not talk about such things in mixed company or in public. Since the '60s, however, when every damned thing was dragged out of the closet, and ladylike and gentlemanly manners were dismissed as elitist, everybody has been free to talk about anything, anywhere at anytime, few suspecting that a world without closets might already be well on its way to barbarism. In this new climate of opinion, I should not have been taken by surprise when one of my students at Penn during the '70s came up to me after class and asked: "What's *your* class background, professor?" "None of your business, my boy," I replied with a smile. Nor should I have been enraged as I watched Diane Sawyer rudely ask George Bush, in front of millions of TV viewers, to explain why people thought of him as a wimp. Had I been Bush, I would have kicked her, but Bush did his best to answer her patiently and politely. I suspect that Sawyer hardly remembers that people like her once thought of Franklin Roosevelt as the equivalent of a wimpy preppy (or featherduster), although the term "wimp" was not coined until our present unisexual age, and the term "preppy" was never used, especially when referring to a graduate of Groton School, where Roosevelt was educated in the British tradition of the Christian gentleman by his headmaster and later lifelong friend, Endicott Peabody, who *never* referred to Groton as a prep school.

Even Walter Lippmann, the George Will of his age, was somewhat deceived by FDR's accent and easy patrician charm. In his now famous column in the *Herald Tribune*, Lippmann wrote of candidate Roosevelt, in 1932, as "a highly impressionable person . . . without very strong convictions. . . . He is an amiable man with many philanthropic impulses, but he is not the dangerous enemy of anything." All too eager to please and too cautious to take political risks, Roosevelt, Lippmann concluded, was merely "a pleasant man who, without any important qualifications for the office, would very much like to be president." What Lippmann and many others failed to take into account, according to Lippmann's biographer, Ronald Steel, was Roosevelt's "tenacious will." Perhaps we should remember that George Bush also possesses a tenacious will beneath his obvious good manners.

In spite of our cherished "Log Cabin" myth, President Bush is now part of a long tradition of aristocratic and patrician presidents. Washington, the two Adamses, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and the two Harrisons, in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the two Roosevelts, Taft, Wilson, and Kennedy, in the 20th, were all born to families of the very highest social status in their respective communities; Washington was one of the wealthiest men of his day.

But of course everybody knows that wealth and privilege are a great help to anyone seeking high office in America; less obvious, however, is the fact that high performance in office is also correlated with privileged origins. Thus, of our six greatest presidents—Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, Washington, Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Wilson—all save Lincoln were born to privilege. On the other hand, of the five presidents—Lincoln, Eisenhower, Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, and Nixon—born with the least advantages, only Lincoln and Eisenhower performed above average in office, while Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, and Nixon were well below average, if not outright failures.

George Bush is also part of a venerable WASP establishment tradition of Skull and Bones men in the nation's service: President William Howard Taft, his son, Senator Robert Taft, Henry Stimson, Averell Harriman, Justice Potter Stewart, William and McGeorge Bundy, and the late Malcolm Baldrige. Stimson—who served in high appointive offices under Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Coolidge, Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, and Truman—was Andover Academy's most distinguished alumnus when he gave the graduation address to George Bush's class of 1942.

Traditions are produced by a cumulation of successful experiments down through the ages. Or as Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. once wrote: "A page of history is worth a volume of logic." The patriarchal family, for instance, has proved to be empirically successful through hundreds of generations, while the egalitarian family is largely the reasoned product of our age alone. And, from all historical evidence, Bush's privileged class origins should have been, from the beginning, an asset rather than a liability; indeed, perhaps the preppy, wimpy, elitist issue has been a problem for media intellectuals alone. By and large I have always assumed that liberal intellectuals have resented *other* people's privileges far more than the average man on the street, or on the factory floor. Thus, Frank Greer, a Democratic consultant, was quoted by *Newsweek* as saying during the presidential campaign: "If I were managing Bush, I wouldn't be filming commercials in Kennebunkport, I'd be in the working-class neighborhoods of Houston. . . ."

Fortunately, intellectuals are sometimes divided on issues, and *Newsweek* also noted that Faith Popcorn, a social trend analyst of some wit, thought that "the elitist thing is just the ticket" for George Bush. "Money could be his flag—how everyone can aspire to getting some," Popcorn continued. "And, after all, there is a return to fashion of good families, good schools, quality. The Kennedys didn't hide it. Why should he? If Ralph Lauren can sell the Polo line to the country, why can't Bush sell polo to the masses . . . ? But he needs a style of his own. Maybe he needs a Scottie." It is my impression that the political forecasters would have profited far more from Popcorn's wit than from Greer's elitist and patronizing conventional wisdom.

Finally, if one may be allowed to bare one's private fantasies, I should suggest that if all the young girls growing up in America today were to marry the first boy they ever kissed, in the style of our First Lady, our beleaguered land would be well on its way to solving its tragic problems of poverty, AIDS, and abortion.

E. DIGBY BALTZELL is professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. His books include *The Protestant Establishment* and *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia*.



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**Meet Poppy's poppa.**

# OLD BLAND-DAD

*By Timothy Noah*

On the day before Thanksgiving, George Bush flew by helicopter to his family compound in Kennebunkport, Maine. Two weeks earlier he had been elected president of the United States, completing a string of personal triumphs. He had turned a humiliating defeat in the Iowa caucus into victory in the New Hampshire primary. He had made a stirring convention speech and pushed ahead of Mike Dukakis in the polls. He had brought to heel a nasty press corps that had once written him off as a wimp. But as the grounds of Walker's Point came into view, these things were not what occupied Bush's mind. Instead, he thought about the sweetest triumph of all. Describing the moment later, Bush said, "I wondered what my old man would say if he could see his little boy now."

Nearly every journalist who's bothered to look has noticed that George Bush has always measured his accomplishments against those of his father, the late Senator Prescott Bush of Connecticut. George Bush "portrays himself as a far smaller figure than his father" (Michael Barone, the *Washington Post*). Bush "would never consider his own feats the equal of his father's" (Garry Wills, *Time*). "According to friends and family, the presence of Prescott Bush has always loomed over George Bush's life" (Bob Woodward and Walter Pincus, the *Post*). Gail Sheehy's psychojournalism often overshoots the mark, but it probably didn't when she observed in her book *Character* that Bush's "need for approval"—i.e., his daddy-pleasing tendency—was "the central defining mark of his character."

Psychologists will tell you there's nothing particularly unusual about a man wanting to measure up to his father (though not all of us get to work it out at the Republican National Convention). Somewhat odder is that Bush continues to feel this way at the age of 64, 17 years after his father's death. And most puzzling of all is that the leader of the free world should have such a diminished view of himself in comparison to this particular father. In the great Oedipal footrace, George Bush has lapped Prescott Bush several times over.

The man George Bush most wants to be like has left almost no imprint on his country's history. Books about the Eisenhower and Kennedy years, when Prescott served his two Senate terms, scarcely mention him. The same is true of the newsmagazines of the day. "I don't remember in any distinct way his doing anything," recalls Neil MacNeil, who covered Congress for *Time* in the Prescott era. Allen Drury, who reported on Capitol Hill for the *New York Times* and *Reader's Digest*, can't remember much about Prescott either, except that he was a "tall, very dignified figure" and a "competent, efficient senator of the middle rank." When Prescott died in 1972, the *New York Times* called him "an authority on government finance and the national economy." But the obit devoted more space to his golf game than to his legislative accomplishments. If Prescott Bush's career is any preview of George Bush's presidency, the nation could be in for an uninspiring four to eight years.

Prescott Sheldon Bush was descended from good New England stock, and is remembered today (when remembered at all) as a consummate Yankee. But he was actually born in Columbus, Ohio, where his father was president of the Buckeye Steel Castings Company, a maker of railway equipment. Prescott rubbed elbows with German and black children at a Columbus public school, a melting-pot experience he would later argue helped prepare him for politics. (Greenwich-bred, Andover-educated George would have to wait until he was in the Navy to mix with other social classes.) At 13, Prescott was sent to prep at St. George's in Rhode Island, where he briefly considered becoming an Episcopal minister. Then he headed for Yale. Prescott was one of those people whose college years are the formative experience of a lifetime. Yale introduced him to Connecticut, his future political base, and at Yale he met E. Roland Harriman, with whom he became a partner in the commercial bank Brown Brothers Harriman & Co.

Prescott's many extracurricular achievements at Yale became the Stations of the Cross for his children. George, like Prescott, played first base on Yale's baseball team and joined Skull and Bones. (The latter association briefly became an issue in George's 1988 campaign when Apache Indians charged that Prescott had stolen Geronimo's skull as a Bones prank.) Another son, Jonathan, followed Prescott into the Whiffenpoofs. For the rest of his life Prescott remained something of a professional Yalie. He even invited a quartet of former Whiffenpoofs to campaign with him for Senate.

After Yale, Prescott had planned to attend law school, but World War I intervened. He joined the Army, serving as a captain in the field artillery and seeing action in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. But he was no Sergeant York—or George Bush. With few wartime heroics of his own to

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boast about in subsequent political campaigns, he trumpeted George's. A 1952 newspaper ad posed the proud father beside his son in Navy uniform and noted that George had "survived being shot down twice in the Pacific."

Returning stateside after the Armistice, Prescott found a job while attending—yes—a Yale reunion. He joined a wholesale hardware company in St. Louis, where he met and married Dorothy Walker. There followed a succession of manufacturing jobs. At one of them he earned a reputation for probity that would last a lifetime by sending his boss to jail for skimming profits. Eventually the Bushes settled in Greenwich, and in 1926 Prescott became a Wall Street banker. He signed on with W. A. Harriman and Co. at the urging of fellow Bonesman Roland Harriman and the company's president, G. H. Walker—who was also Prescott's father-in-law.

The firm that later became Brown Brothers Harriman was the sort of place that put a premium on "the ability of the managing partners to get along easily with each other," Prescott once said. As Roland's brother Averell drifted off to Washington to join the New Deal, the partnership floated pleasantly on accumulated Harriman wealth, underwriting federal, state, and municipal bonds and buying and selling stocks on commission. It was a far cry from the boom-bust Texas oil business where George would seek his fortune, as George well knew when he turned down an offer from Brown Brothers and headed west.

Prescott grew rich at Brown Brothers, serving on the boards of companies and buying up stock in infant corporations such as CBS. With his lanky gait, bushy eyebrows, and high-WASP reserve, he became the model of a Greenwich burgher, "a contemporary money aristocrat whom a John Cheever hero would have met at a party, but in whose pool he would not have swum," in the phrase of former LBJ aide Harry McPherson. Recent descriptions of Prescott by his children evoke an imposing figure, exacting as Joe Kennedy but more remote; Jonathan Bush told Walt Harrington of the *Washington Post*, "I never heard him fart."

As far back as Yale, Prescott had contemplated a political career. At Brown Brothers, he began to lay the groundwork, heading up the USO War Fund Campaign during World War II, serving on a variety of community boards in Greenwich, and raising funds for Republican candidates. In 1946, after Prescott's congresswoman, Clare Boothe Luce, announced she wouldn't seek reelection to the House, he considered a bid, but was held back by financial considerations and by Roland Harriman's plea, "We need you more than the House needs you." In other words: a gentleman simply doesn't drop weighty business affairs to run for the lower body.

The Senate was another matter. When a Senate seat was vacated in 1950, Prescott jumped in, won the nomination, but lost narrowly to William Benton, co-founder (with Chester Bowles) of the advertising firm Benton & Bowles. Two years later Prescott tried again, but this time lost the nomination to William Purtell, a Hartford businessman. In July, however, the state's other senator, Brien McMahon, suddenly died, and state party leaders trekked to Fisher's Island to ask the vacationing Prescott to try a third time. They found him in a petulant mood. "I've had it," he told them. "I'm not going around that state again with my hat in my hand." But he was finally persuaded that the nomination was his for the asking.

Prescott swept into the Senate on Eisenhower's coattails and began the career that today nobody remembers very distinctly. Much of it was spent at the Burning Tree Country Club, where he often golfed with Ike. Prescott was a former president of the United States Golf Association. (He had persuaded golf officials to do away with the "stymie," under which there was no remedy for a golfer whose access to the hole was blocked by another ball.) Prescott held an all-time 18-hole record for men in his age group, and as a senator he once jokingly proposed that the Mall be turned into a giant golf course. It's no wonder George wasn't put off by Dan Quayle's happy-golfer image.

Off the greens, Prescott's main legislative concern—like that of most legislators—was to help his home state. After floods hit Connecticut in 1955, he helped draft flood control legislation. From a perch on the Armed Services Committee he kept funds flowing for the Polaris submarine, made in Groton. State interests took precedence even over those of his family. In 1956, when an oil lobbyist threatened to run George out of the drilling business because of his father's refusal to support a gas deregulation bill, Prescott held fast because he believed the bill would hurt his state. "But don't you worry about it," Prescott remembered telling George. "If there's any aftereffects from it, just tell me about them, and we'll take care of that."

On national issues, Prescott blended in with other Northeastern Republican senators like Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts and Clifford Case of New Jersey, the sort of men who get labeled "moderate" today but were called "liberal" back then. The liberal Republicans found themselves in a dilemma—"without much power to shape the outcome, without the will to divert it," in McPherson's words. The resulting role was not a demanding one, although they did lend a hand in fighting reactionary Southern Democrats on civil rights and a few other worthy causes. Prescott, in particular, rose to a stern political challenge in publicly questioning Joe McCarthy's methods and opposing faculty loyalty oaths.

Prescott was a critic of the New Deal's excesses, including agriculture subsidies and Social Security disability benefits that he deemed too generous. He helped rewrite the Securities Exchange Act to make it less burdensome to his Wall Street brethren. He even supported a forerunner of George Bush's beloved line-item veto. On the whole, though, he drifted along with the post-New Deal consensus, voting for increases in the minimum wage and supporting both programs that in retrospect seem successful (the national highway system) and unsuccessful (the Small Business Administration, urban renewal). Prescott's positions were rarely daring. For example, he co-sponsored the legislation creating the Peace Corps, praising it as a less expensive alternative to foreign aid, but resisted its domestic counterpart, VISTA, which rocked the political boat at home. Abroad, he supported the new internationalism, cheering on the rise of NATO and the World Bank.

Prescott stayed in the Senate until 1963, then retired,



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citing his worsening arthritis. It's possible he worried he couldn't beat Abe Ribicoff, who succeeded him. Prescott returned to Brown Brothers Harriman, and George Bush embarked on his own political career, running unsuccessfully for Senate in 1964 and then winning a House seat in 1966. Prescott died in 1972, and soon George was more influential than his father had ever been. There are, of course, worse father figures to choose from (and in the past George has chosen them: Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan come to mind). In fact, as purely a father figure, Prescott shows up well—a distinguished, ambitious, bright, athletic man of integrity. But his credentials as a political role model are something else. If George is still looking for the Vision Thing, let's hope he doesn't imitate the almost entirely forgettable career of his old man.

**Would you buy a used car from these guys?**

# THE BROTHERS BUSH

*By Mark Hosenball*

The story of how George and Barbara Bush set out to make their fortune in west Texas has almost passed into American political folklore. It hasn't quite got the quaint charm of a Horatio Alger story; the future president got his first job in an oil firm run by one of his father's Yale classmates (and a fellow member of Skull and Bones), and when George decided to set up his own company in 1950, the several thousand dollars in seed money was raised by his uncle Herbie Walker, a Wall Street financier. Still, the Bush story has a few elements of the American Dream. Bush worked hard and followed his work wherever it took him, moving his family from Connecticut to Texas to California and back to Texas. He entered a risky business and prevailed through innovation; his company was among the pioneers in offshore drilling. Bush was no empire builder—he sold his business in 1966 for $1.1 million, probably less than it was worth—but he was an honest, industrious entrepreneur, and his business career sufficed for purposes of making campaign commercials.

George Bush's five children are now at roughly the ages at which their parents were struggling to put together the deals that would take them from the dust bowl of the Permian Basin to the manicured lawns of River Oaks. But the paths to fame and fortune chosen by some of the younger Bushes are less inspiring than the one taken by their old man. If the time ever comes to make their campaign commercials—two of the sons are being talked about for high political office—the creative challenge may be a bit greater than in their father's case.

Although the Bush boys, like their father before them, have tried to make more money, they haven't always succeeded. Moreover, they don't seem to share his commitment to making money the old-fashioned way. Among the traits that crop up in their financial histories are an attraction to get-rich-quick schemes (including the kinds of get-rich-quick schemes that don't get you rich), and a preference for modern yuppie paper-shuffling over red-blooded, driving entrepreneurship. These are assuredly children of the postwar generation, and not of the era when even men Bred for Destiny, like George Bush, believed that hard work played an essential part in establishing credentials for leadership.

The president's eldest son, George Walker Bush (known as George Jr.), has followed most closely in his father's footsteps. After earning his MBA at Harvard Business School (one ticket George Sr. never punched), George Jr. trundled off to Midland, Texas, where his father had lived, to make his fortune. And like his father, George Jr. took up oil drilling as his principal business. But there the similarity ends. Whereas George Sr. had seen drilling as a way to recover oil, George Jr. seems to have seen it partly as a way to sell tax shelters. During the great energy crisis of the late 1970s and early '80s, George Jr. took advantage of the financial gimmicks of the time to attract investors. One of his specialties was selling limited partnerships in his drilling ventures, partnerships which—in good times—generated profits and which—in good times or bad—generated tax write-offs (although a prospectus for potential investors gave the perfunctory warning that "if an Internal Revenue Service audit of a partnership occurs, there is no assurance that certain deductions allocated to the limited partners will not be challenged").

George Jr. also made a brief excursion into precious metals, joining the board of a company called the Lucky Chance Mine, of which a Harvard Business School classmate and old drilling partner was president. Once a hot number on the "penny stock" charts, which are at the K-Mart end of the over-the-counter market, Lucky Chance proposed to revive a long-defunct California mine that dated back to the days of the great Mother Lode at the beginning of the 20th century. The idea was to capitalize on the sharp rise in gold prices of the early '80s. Unfortunately, the plan faced at least two obsta-

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cles. First, the mine was flooded. (The mining company says it has been trying to drain it for the last several years.) Second, the company couldn't be 100 percent sure that somebody else didn't have a legal claim to the gold. As an annual report admitted, the question of who owns any gold found in the mine is "subject to many uncertainties of existing law and its application." It's not surprising, then, that after Bush joined the company, its stock went in only one direction: down. The stock's peak the year before his arrival was $1.62 a share. Last year it traded at between two and six cents per share. Bush eventually gave up his place on the board of the company.

In 1984 George Jr. merged Bush Exploration with another venture called Spectrum 7 Energy Corporation. When the solidarity of the OPEC cartel evaporated and world oil prices collapsed, George Jr.'s oil ventures did not fare well. By 1986, when oil prices dropped 50 percent in six months, the pool of new capital for his drilling projects was as dry as the west Texas desert. Around this time, during one of his less optimistic moments, George Jr. lamented to the *New York Times* that "I'm all name and no money."

Not for long. George Jr. managed to attract a white knight, a high-flying company called Harken Energy, which collects failing companies and tries to turn them around. Before he even had to turn his business school textbook to Chapter XI, Harken stepped in with a merger deal. George Jr. got no cash or role in Harken's management, but he did get 1.5 million shares of Harken restricted stock, warrants to buy 200,000 more, and a seat on Harken's board.

If George Jr. has found shelter from the storms that have shaken his father's old industry, his younger brother Neil has had harder luck. Neil, who works out of Denver, started an oil firm, called JNB, with two friends in 1983. The results of his first exploration projects were less than boffo: out of 16 holes drilled, 15 were dry. Bush told the *Times* his company was more vulnerable than others because he didn't set it up until after oil prices had begun to crash. Indeed, that would be a disadvantage.

Lately Neil has had something in common with his father: both are trying to cope with the fallout of the savings and loan crisis, though in very different ways. Until his resignation during the election campaign last summer, Neil was a director of the Silverado Banking, Savings and Loan Association, the third-largest thrift in Colorado. Weeks after the resignation, regulators stepped in and seized control of Silverado, which had gone broke. The Federal Home Loan Bank Board said Silverado's failure was the result of "alleged violations of laws, rules, and regulations and unsafe and unsound banking practices." Investigators indicated they were particularly interested in a series of unusual transactions in which Silverado loaned money to property developers who then agreed to buy the S&L's stock. This allowed Silverado to boost its capital, but critics charge it also created a misleading picture of the bank's net worth. And the financing scheme does seem to have a certain circular quality to it.

The banking industry trade press reported that it could cost the government $1 billion to rescue Silverado, one of the most costly single-bank bailouts of the entire S&L crisis. Neil Bush received a subpoena to testify in a lawsuit brought by angry homeowners in suburban Denver who lost money when a housing project financed by Silverado collapsed. They "have a concern about the role [Bush] played as a director," according to their lawyer. Bush's lawyer calls the subpoena "harassment."

The most political of the new generation of Bush entrepreneurs is perhaps Jeb Bush, 35. Unlike Neil and George Jr., who emulated their father by striking out to make their fortunes in the West, Jeb headed south. With his Hispanic wife in tow (she's the mother of the "little brown ones") Jeb settled in Miami, immersing himself in such local pursuits as the real estate business, charities, and the local Republican Party. Jeb served for three years as Dade County Republican chairman, and later was appointed Florida's secretary of commerce. In Miami, Republican politics has come to intersect with the byzantine world of Latin American exile politics. Jeb has been involved with some of the exile community's popular anti-communist crusades, such as Radio Marti and the Nicaraguan *contras*. He became so deeply committed to these causes that *Insight* magazine, the Moonies' answer to *Time*, recently suggested that Jeb "eventually may become a shadow assistant secretary of state for Latin America."

In addition to its reputation for feverish politics, southern Florida has long been known as a refuge for businessmen whose ethics are, one might say, less than immaculate. Jeb Bush has not entirely avoided contact with such individuals. His name cropped up two years ago in an investigation by a House Government Operations subcommittee into the affairs of International Medical Centers, once America's largest health maintenance organization. International Medical fell on hard times when its president, a flamboyant businessman named Miguel Recarey Jr., was indicted on racketeering charges and fled the country. The company's contract with the Medicare program, which had provided much of its business, was cancelled.

In congressional testimony, Mac Haddow, a former aide to Reagan administration Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler, alleged that in 1984, while Jeb Bush was Dade County Republican boss (and, of course, the vice president's son), Jeb contacted Heckler on International Medical's behalf. According to Haddow, who himself was later sent to prison on unrelated corruption charges, Jeb lobbied Heckler for a special favor that would allow the firm to take on more Medicare patients than government regulations normally allow. Haddow claimed that Jeb also phoned Heckler to vouch for the good character of International Medical's officers, although he didn't recall whether Jeb had specifically vouched for Recarey's bona fides. (International Medical also hired as a lobbyist former White House aide Lyn Nofziger, later convicted in the Wedtech scandal.)

At the time of the House investigation, Jeb Bush said he couldn't remember talking to Heckler, but that he had spoken about International Medical to another



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high-ranking Health and Human Services Department official. Bush also said he knew Recarey as a Republican Party contributor. The *Miami Herald* added to the intrigue, however, when it uncovered another link between the two men. It reported that Jeb's small real estate firm had received $75,000 in fees from Recarey after Jeb had made his phone calls to Washington. In an interview with *Newsday* last year, Jeb denied that the fees were related to any lobbying he did on Recarey's behalf, but he conceded that his company had failed in the task it was supposed to perform for the $75,000: to find a new corporate headquarters for International Medical. (Jeb was said to be overseas when I called his office for comment.)

Despite their spotty track records as businessmen, the young Bushes are already being touted as potential stars in a family political dynasty. Jeb has been mentioned as a possible challenger to two Florida Democratic congressmen, Dante Fascell and Claude Pepper, and there has also been talk of his running for lieutenant governor if his friend, Florida Governor Bob Martinez, seeks a second term. Jeb has already served as an ambassador of his father's kinder, gentler foreign policy by making a whirlwind tour, with one of his young sons, of earthquake-stricken Armenia.

Meanwhile, George Jr., as he waited out the shakeout in the oil patch under Harken Energy's protective umbrella, became involved heavily in his father's campaign. Lately he is being discussed as a possible Republican candidate for governor of Texas. His political stock didn't rise any, however, when he served as a surrogate for his father in John Treen's unsuccessful campaign against ex-Klansman David Duke for a seat in the Louisiana legislature.

**Why enterprise zones don't work.**

# THE KEMP CURE-ALL

*By David Osborne*

In Jack Kemp's bosom beats the heart of an activist. Beneath his silvery perma-press coif lies the mind of a conservative. When the two get together—when the impulse to do something collides with the laissez-faire mindset—the result is inevitable: another tax cut. First came the supply-side cuts of 1981. Then the flat tax of 1986. And now come enterprise zones.

For nearly a decade, Kemp has argued that by virtually eliminating taxes and regulation in the inner city, we can spark a market-driven entrepreneurial renaissance. Now that he's secretary of housing and urban development, he may get to try it. The Bush budget includes $1.05 billion for enterprise zone tax breaks, spread over four years.

Unless Kemp radically revises his conception of enterprise zones, this will not be money well spent. I have argued elsewhere, in a book called *Laboratories of Democracy*, that we have a great deal to learn from the economic and social experimentation sweeping our states. In area after area, state governments have shown what works and what doesn't work. And in the case of enterprise zones, the verdict is in: Kemp's tax-driven version doesn't work.

This is not to say that enterprise zones can't work, or that Kemp is entirely misguided. He is right, for instance, to insist that poor areas will only improve when the market begins to work in their favor. But the conservative notion that we can create a healthy market simply by cutting taxes and regulations is simplistic. In areas that already have low rents and low wages, how much of a difference are low taxes going to make? Such communities also have sagging infrastructures, poor housing, and a shortage of educated, skilled workers—not to mention crime, drugs, illiteracy, and welfare dependency. To create a healthy market, this entire constellation of social pathologies, unskilled labor, and inadequate services must be altered. And if that is to happen, government must play a central role.

This is the virtually unanimous conclusion of those who have studied state enterprise zones: tax incentives are relatively ineffective, and deregulation is a mirage. The keys to success are active development strategies, involving business, government, and the local community.

The idea of enterprise zones is an import. Peter Hall, a socialist professor in Great Britain, proposed it after a look at the low-tax, low-wage vitality of Hong Kong. Hall suggested "freeports" in the worst areas of the inner city: small enclaves free of taxes, regulations, customs controls, duties, and a minimum wage. It was Hall's version of a "Hail Mary" pass: things looked bleak, nothing else had worked, so why not try something truly audacious—an attempt "to re-create the Hong Kong of the 1950s and 1960s inside inner Liverpool or inner Glasgow."

Margaret Thatcher pushed the idea through, in modi-

*continued on page 24*

DAVID OSBORNE is the author of *Laboratories of Democracy*, published in 1988 by Harvard Business School Press.



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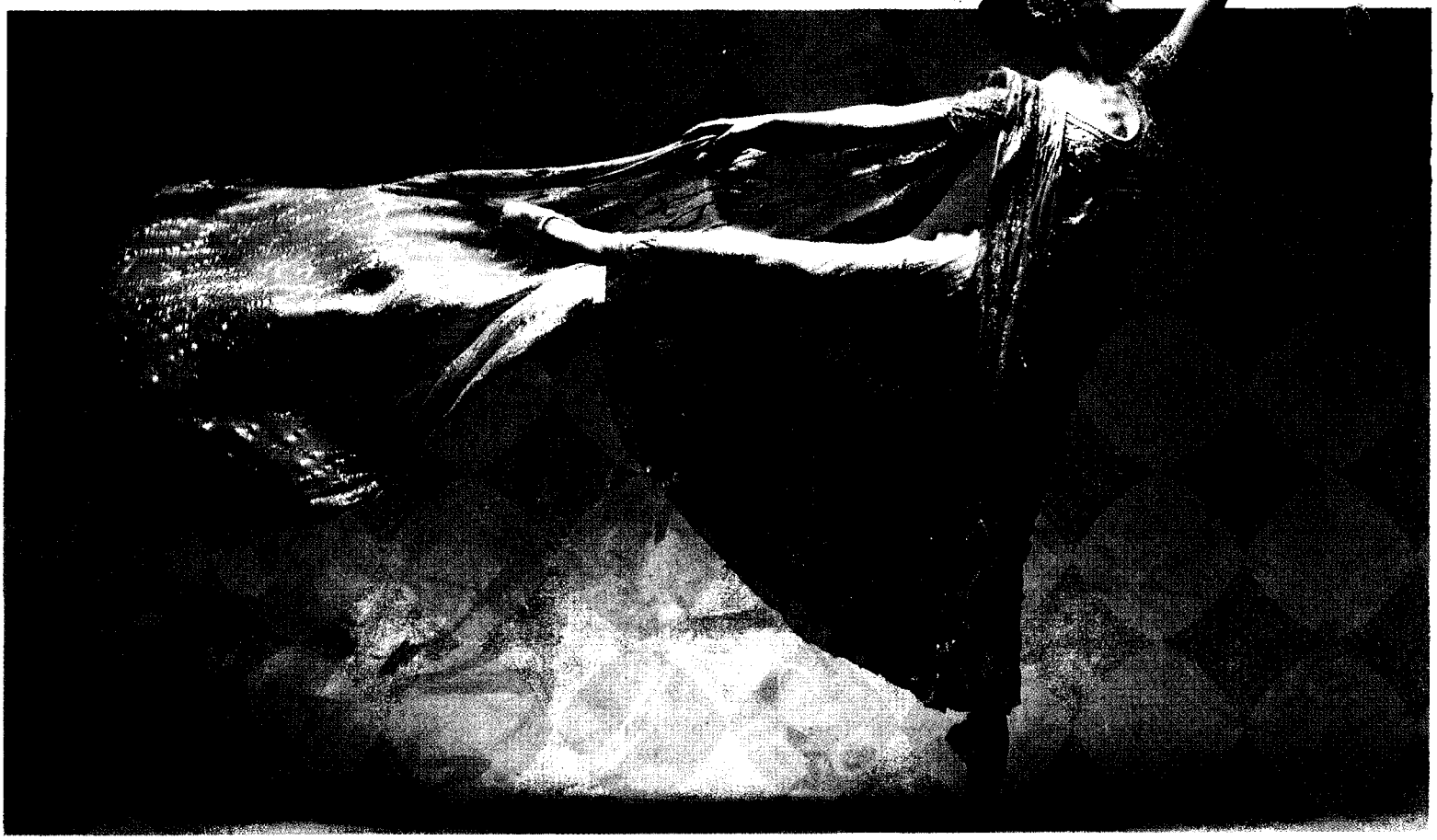
# Star light.



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# Star bright.

A major ballet company at its absolute stellar height is virtually an historical event. Critics rave, audiences marvel and news travels. Cities commission ballets. Foreign governments send invitations. And everyone, on stage and off, knows the moment is indeed momentous. This is American Ballet Theatre today.

Mikhail Baryshnikov performed the most intriguing leap of his career to become Artistic Director in 1980. Now he's had time to see his particular chapter of ABT's illustrious history unfold. It's compelling. The repertory reinterprets the great classics with new drama and intensity. It welcomes the best modern choreographers. It places new demands on dancers who respond with breathtaking power and exquisite artistry.

This is the moment American Ballet Theatre begins its 50th Anniversary celebration. We celebrate it for the remarkable achievement it is. ABT's entire history is a triumph of attaining excellence despite impossible odds. At first, it took ballet into an America that knew little about ballet. And at last, it became an American ballet company equal to the finest the world has ever known. Its star continues on the ascendant. Long may it shine.

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**AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE:** (Top Left) Cynthia Harvey in LA BAYADERE. Photo by Gregory Heisler. (Right) Amy Rose in GAÎTE PARISIENNE. Photo by Martha Swope. (Bottom) Ross Stretton, Martine van Hamel, Kevin McKenzie in ÉTUDES. Photo by Martha Swope.

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fied form. A British economist at the Heritage Foundation, Stuart Butler, sold it to Jack Kemp, who sold it to Ronald Reagan. In Washington the issue sank into ideological stalemate. But 30-odd states went off and tried it on their own. Today they boast between 500 and 700 zones, with at least as many designated but not yet operational.

Studies of these areas leave something to be desired; you never know exactly what would have happened had the zone not been created. Still, the various studies done in recent years have come to remarkably similar conclusions. Two studies each in Connecticut and Maryland found no impact. Studies in Illinois and Louisiana found little change. A study of Indiana's "most successful" zone found genuine progress, but its authors attributed the success not to tax and regulatory incentives but to the aggressive recruitment work, backed by hefty training and infrastructure grants, of the publicly funded organization that manages the zone. This finding was reinforced by an in-depth analysis of 90 enterprise zones, conducted by Rodney Erickson of Penn State. He concluded: "One of the key factors that bridged across all of the high-performance zones was a strong, pro-active development policy."

The general failure of tax-driven zones hasn't kept state officials from lauding them. Connecticut offers a good example. Frequently cited as the best state program, it provides property tax abatements, a 50 percent corporate tax break for firms hiring disadvantaged workers to fill 30 percent of their new jobs, training funds, grants of up to $1,500 for new jobs created, small business loans at low interest rates, and miscellaneous other incentives. The state claims the program has created or saved 10,000 jobs.

A reality check is useful here. When *Business Facilities* magazine checked employment figures after four years of zone operation, it discovered that while the overall state economy had boomed, the zones had lost 250 jobs. When the Citizens' Research Education Network surveyed a third of all businesses in the Hartford zone, it found that only 12 percent were aware of all the incentives available and none had used any of them.

Bridgeport has Connecticut's most active and most successful zone, according to HUD. By 1985 this program had a staff of three full-time professionals and an annual budget of more than $150,000. State officials boast that it attracted $33 million in new investments during its first five years. But when University of Illinois Professor Earl Jones compared zone investments and rehab activity during the first two years with those in a similar but unzoned area of Bridgeport, he found no difference. And a 1986 HUD case study found that not one businessperson who had received zone benefits said they were "the principal motivating factor in making a particular investment decision."

Massachusetts, just north of Connecticut, is one of the only industrial states without a zone program. Yet it is widely and rightly believed to have accomplished more in turning around its declining urban centers than any other state. Why? Because it has what business needs: capital, skilled labor, access to good markets, relatively low crime rates, and a state government that has been creative and aggressive in its development strategies.

Pennsylvania offers another contrast. Richard Thornburgh, now Kemp's colleague in the Bush Cabinet, was the only governor in America who created enterprise zones but eschewed the Kemp tax-driven model. Thornburgh built a program that offers $250,000-a-year grants to communities that create comprehensive development strategies, then gives them priority in all other state grant and bond programs. Pennsylvania did add a few small tax incentives after several years, but they are hardly the heart of the program. Not surprisingly, Erickson's study rated Pennsylvania's program among the most effective in the nation.

Congress passed a bill in 1987 that would allow HUD to do much the same thing as the Pennsylvania government: designate 100 zones and target federal resources there. Kemp will decide whether to pursue it.

Why are state tax incentives so insignificant? For one thing, state business taxes rarely account for more than five percent of a business's expenses, so even deep cuts don't turn many heads. Advocates of federal enterprise zones argue that federal tax breaks, being larger, would do much more. But that's far from clear. An extensive literature demonstrates that taxes are quite low on the list of factors that influence business location decisions. (And a more recent literature indicates that regulatory environment is relatively insignificant.) A General Accounting Office study asked employers in two Maryland zones to rate the importance of various factors in their latest location decisions. "Financial inducements" came in 12th out of 13. The top four factors listed were "market access," "community characteristics," "site characteristics," and "government cooperation."

Even business leaders, though hardly averse to low taxes, admit that they're almost never decisive. John Sloan, president of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, which surveyed small businesses in 85 cities, said, "Far more important considerations, especially for the labor-intensive retail and service concerns that zones must attract if they are to cut unemployment significantly, include access to capital and a qualified labor pool, immediate market viability, adequate police protection, and affordable insurance. From these viewpoints, depressed areas offer companies nothing short of a hostile environment. No amount of 'less government' can create money, security, or a market where none exists."

Neither surveys nor state-level experiments, of course, can tell us what deep federal tax cuts would do. But the British experience can give us a clue. There extremely steep cuts have succeeded in shifting some investment into enterprise zones, but the shift has come at great expense, and with very little payoff for the poor.

The British program virtually eliminated taxes on industrial, commercial, and retail buildings and drastically simplified zoning and permit processes for new buildings. It did bring significant investment into the zones, but 75 percent of that investment simply moved in from outside, thus further depressing surrounding areas. (And—as is always the case with such incentives—an unknown number of businesses got tax breaks for in-



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vestments they would have made regardless.) The cost of creating those jobs that were genuinely new was, by one count, $67,000 per job.

The British example is a classic exercise in steering investment to a place, rather than to people. This is fine—though expensive—if the goal is to redevelop a place. A similar strategy has helped lure private investment back to Times Square in New York, for instance. It could also work to lure plants back to areas that have lost their manufacturing base but still have a skilled work force and an adequate infrastructure. In fact, the state zones that do work are in precisely these kinds of areas, according to Erickson.

This strategy may make sense if we decide it is better to subsidize firms to move into deindustrialized regions than to make the victims of industrial change pay the financial and emotional costs of moving elsewhere. But that is not Jack Kemp's purpose. He is talking about the inner city. And he is talking about stimulating homegrown entrepreneurship, not recruiting large firms. His target is the people in the zones. All our experience suggests, however, that by aiming at a place, he is likely to miss the people.

The problem is simple. Deep tax incentives may shift investment geographically, but they cannot change the way the market works. In or out of zones, companies still need skilled, literate employees—and no amount of tax incentives can entice firms to hire people who can't reach the required levels of proficiency fairly quickly. (Purdue economist James Papke found that zone residents got only 6.3 percent of the manufacturing jobs created in Indiana's ten zones.) Meanwhile, the zone residents who don't get the new jobs nonetheless have to pay higher rents when real estate demand drives up rates. Poor residents—and sometimes struggling businesses—can even be forced out of the neighborhood when landlords begin rehabilitating properties, just as in any other gentrification process.

The distinction here is between economic growth and economic development. Growth is simply an increase in output. Development is a process through which people, communities, and firms increase their capacities to produce, creating an upward spiral that has its own momentum. Rural Southern states such as Arkansas and South Carolina experienced significant growth from 1950 through 1975 by recruiting branch plants from the North. But they did nothing to change the capacities of local people and communities, and when the plants moved overseas or closed in the late 1970s and '80s, they left behind devastated economies. To paraphrase Kemp adviser Paul Pryde, development is what happens in Japan; growth is what happens in Kuwait.

Fortunately, we have a growing body of state and local experience—little of it connected to enterprise zones—to tell us what does work in the inner city. The necessary elements include investment capital; management assistance for local businesses; infrastructure investments; improved services, such as crime control, housing, and education; significant job training and adult education; and efforts to help people on welfare get training and jobs. And it is essential that community members benefit not just as employees but as owners—through tenant coops, community organizations, and old-fashioned home and business ownership. The most powerful weapon is a development institution that can bring private investment into the community, make loans, work with business owners, and guide the development process to make sure local residents get the benefits. A model for this already exists: the Shorebank Corporation—a private development bank, subsidized by philanthropists, that has turned around a poor black neighborhood on Chicago's South Side.

Even the father of American Enterprise Zones is now persuaded that tax cuts alone won't work. "One of the things we've learned is that you don't just declare a zone open and expect things to happen," says Stuart Butler. "You have to go in and use zone incentives as an advertising tool, and also as a good base on which to build other kinds of strategies. Working with community-based organizations to address a lot of social problems within the zone—crime and that kind of thing—seems to be very important." Paul Pryde agrees: "Federal tax breaks are necessary but in no fashion sufficient. A zone that has federal tax breaks but doesn't have a lot of state and local commitment, doesn't have the attention of the mayor and development officials, where the zone isn't marketed and managed creatively, isn't going to work."

Could a Kemp bill embody a comprehensive proactive strategy? The fact that Butler and Pryde are among his advisers bodes well. All they have to do is convince him to modify his thinking on the subject. Under such a revised approach, federal tax breaks would be the bait used to convince state and local governments to pursue comprehensive strategies. The declaration of a federal enterprise zone would be recognition both that an area was impoverished and that state or local officials had fashioned a program capable of changing that.

Grants could serve the same purpose, of course, and waste far less money. It's true, as conservatives note, that grant programs can fall prey to pork-barrel politics, but exactly the same tendency afflicts selectively distributed tax incentives. This is a moot point, though: Kemp is not going to abandon supply-side economics anytime soon. Tax incentives it is.

If these incentives were crafted carefully—to help poor people rather than poor places, and to minimize the amount of money wasted on investments that would have been made otherwise—they could play a moderately constructive role in their own right, aside from their role in guiding state and local governments. For instance, tax breaks could be limited to companies that hired a significant percentage of poor zone residents. (The last thing we want is venture capitalists and commodity traders moving their four-person offices into zones to take advantage of capital gains tax breaks.) The breaks could also be denied to any firm moving from a distressed area outside a zone into a zone.

Kemp is getting advice from some of the right people, and the evidence they'll present to him is clear. The question is whether he will listen. Stay tuned. In an otherwise dull administration, the battle between Jack Kemp's heart and Jack Kemp's mind should be worth watching. •



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# BOOKS & The Arts

## *Stanley Kauffmann on Films*

### Troubled Spirits

Maurice Pialat is one of those gifted directors who are well regarded in international film circles but are little known to the public, even the best public. (Other examples: Shohei Imamura, Miklos Jancsó, Chris Marker, Mrinal Sen, Victor Erice.) These people spend their lives trying to work as artists in a medium that is more tightly bound to commerce than even the theater or architecture. They find ways to support themselves, often in TV, and they spend much of their time hunting out backers to launch films unlikely to make money. Their work usually gets some distribution in their own countries, is shown in festivals and sometimes wins prizes, occasionally gets released in other countries; books are written about them; yet many many thousands of potentially responsive viewers never get a chance to see the films. The range of choice in videocassettes, though surprisingly wide, doesn't yet include much by the group in question.

Pialat, a Frenchman born in 1925, has made seven feature films, along with numerous shorts and much TV work. I haven't seen them all and haven't liked all that I've seen but have long been aware that he is a presence of significance. I hope—*must* hope—that his latest makes his presence more evident. **Under the Sun of Satan** was done in 1987, won the Best Film award at Cannes that year, was shown at the 1987 New York Film Festival, and at last is released here (by Alive Films). It's the finest French film since *Thérèse* and *Vagabond* and has links to them. It's based on Georges Bernanos's first novel, thus resides in the spiritual domain of those earlier films, and the leading female role is played by Sandrine Bonnaire, that wonderful woman who had the leading role in *Vagabond*. (She has previously acted for Pialat.)

Also, as Pialat obviously wants to make clear, the style of his film derives from that of Robert Bresson, who filmed two Bernanos novels, *Diary of a Country Priest* and *Mouchette*. It's as if Pialat were saying that there is only one appropriate cinema style for Bernanos, that Bresson defined it, and that he is doing his best to continue it. (It's not a style I remember in other Pialat work.)

Gérard Depardieu, who too has previously acted for Pialat, is a young priest, posted somewhere in the country, who is undergoing an agony of self-doubt, of conviction that he, in his office, is losing the struggle against ubiquitous Satan. Unknown to his dean, who later reproves him for it, he wears a hair shirt; he scourges himself. In his parish is a teenager, Bonnaire, who is spiritually dislocated, agonized by love and passion, fierce, highly (to use a catchall term) neurotic. Pregnant, she kills her wealthy lover. She sees a doctor who is also her lover and who refuses to abort her child.

She encounters Depardieu, who is riven because he cannot, in any way, help her. Eventually she kills herself. Depardieu is transferred to another parish where he manages to do some good but is still tormented by his unworthiness and the omnipresence of evil. His health, never good, declines. He prays that, if he can still be of any use, God will let him live a while longer. The answer, if it is such, comes not long after. One day he dies while hearing a confession.

Spiritual problems are not as explicable as, say, engineering problems; still, the arguments in this film seem more to describe a general territory of mystery than to resolve questions, let alone provide answers. Nonetheless the dialogue is so literate—I'm judging by subtitles—and is so ravishingly spoken by the actors that one succumbs to intent if not to completely clarified theme. From first moment to last, the film is gripping, so purposeful and authoritative that its very being is as grave as its subject. Manner can sometimes outweigh content, but here they are marvelously synergistic.

Depardieu has become the butt of jokes because he is in so many films. I wish he were in even more: he is almost always superb—and astonishingly versa-

### FILMS WORTH SEEING

**High Hopes**. *A wry dry comedy, in unusual form, about Thatcher's England. A dropout couple in their 30s, along with their relatives, friends, and enemies. Occasionally broad, mostly keen and intelligent. (Reviewed 3/13/89)* **Lawrence of Arabia**. *Bathe in gorgeousness. Rejoice in fine acting. Hear literate dialogue. Despite some wavering in Part Two, this restored and re-recorded version is sheer pleasure. (2/20/89)* **Tap**. *Much tap dancing, all of it good. Much story, all of it negligible. Ignore the story and enjoy the dancing—by Gregory Hines and some real old-timers. Suzzanne Douglas, the heart interest, is lovely. (3/20/89)* **New York Stories**. *Three Manhattan tales by three noted directors. Francis Coppola's is dim, but Woody Allen spins a good Jewish-mother joke, and Martin Scorsese tops the trio with a vivid SoHo art-world imbroglio. (3/27/89)* **—SK**



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tile. Remember his Danton in Wajda's film, for example, and he will not be the first actor you might think of to play a tormented, physically failing young priest. But Depardieu is so electrically imaginative, so masterly in concentration, that his very size becomes an asset for the role. His bulk seems an extra task that Heaven has given this delicate man, an extra burden that he must lug around in his dailiness.

When Bonnaire plays to people's faces, she scorches them. She seems a Medusa, as if her address were more than one could stand—in sheer naked revelation. Pialat himself plays the dean (he has often acted) and maintains the French acting tradition (Pierre Brasseur, Louis Jouvet, Françoise Rosay) in which the flow of language is both dramatic and sonorous, as if the voices, while conveying sense, also create the film's music track. (Incidentally, or perhaps not, the film has very little music.)

As director, Pialat relies heavily on Pialat the actor, along with all the other excellent actors. Many scenes are between two people, and Pialat "gives" them the scenes: no odd angles, no editorial fussing, he just lets them speak, cutting from one face to another without enjoined ticktock, only as the rhythms of thought and interest command.

Yet within shots, his actors often move in lines that intensify the moment. Bonnaire's first appearance is out of shadow in a gently curving line into the light, her very movement suggesting her fears and her insistence. All along the way, small stabs of verity help the main purpose. After Bonnaire kills herself in her room, Depardieu carries her body down the stairs past her mother. The mother stands absolutely motionless, turned utterly to stone as the priest carrying her dead daughter descends to where she is and passes her. Later in the church she is convulsed with grief, but this only underscores the mute agony of that first moment.

Throughout the film we see horses, carriages and carts, five-horse teams drawing farm wagons. Depardieu reads by candlelight in his room. The period seems to be very early in this century. Then suddenly we see and hear a relatively modern motor truck. Pialat has wanted us to make assumptions so that he could gently prod us about the ease of making assumptions.

Light—above all, light—is a power in this film. The opening scene between Depardieu and Pialat has a predominant twilight tone. Later Depardieu walks into a sepia afternoon, then trudges across great fields as night comes, during which he meets a possible incarnation of Satan, who kisses him on the mouth—all this photographed with the figures dark


In 1977, the House of Representatives voted to allow television coverage of its proceedings. Bob Rosencrans was then president of a large cable company known as UA-Columbia. The idea of creating a public affairs network on cable to televise Congress was being widely discussed. It seemed like a risky proposal to many industry leaders. Nevertheless, Bob believed the time was right for the cable television industry to demonstrate its commitment to public service.

The son of Russian and Austrian immigrants, Bob Rosencrans grew up in New York during the New Deal and World War II. "We were a very idealistic family," he recalls. So much so that his own idealism endured despite the loss of his older brother in combat. Since then, he says, "I still look for the better side of people."

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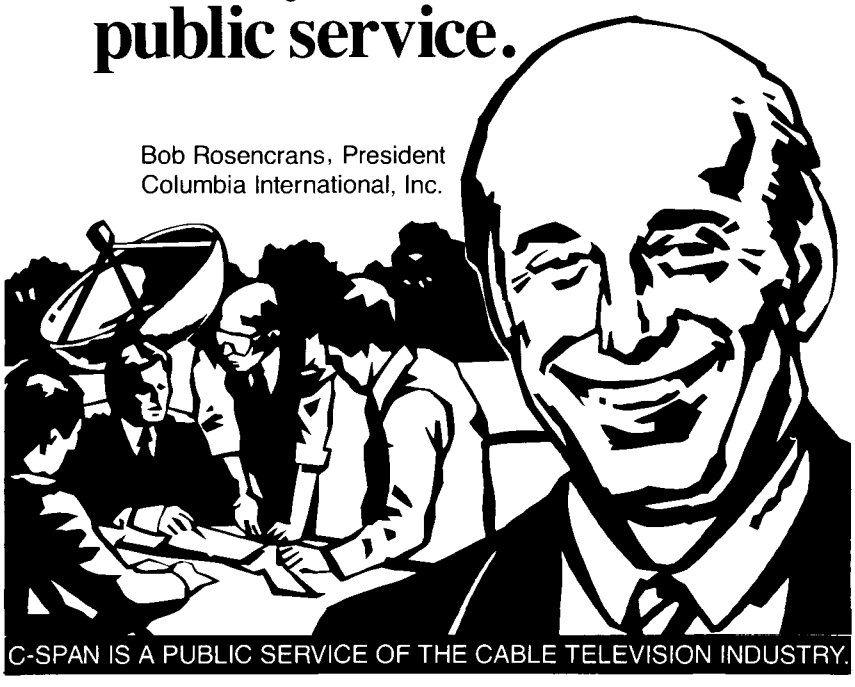

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against a very pale blue sky. Pialat has made Willy Kurant, the cinematographer, a major contributor to this disturbing, exquisite film.

*Under the Sun of Satan* is one of the more than 2,000 entries in *The Holt Foreign Film Guide* (Henry Holt, 638 pp., $39.95). Ronald Bergan and Robyn Karney, both apparently British, have chosen their entries from all non-English-language film since 1895. (Relatively few of the choices are silent films, in which original language hardly matters.) The book is double-columned and arranged alphabetically; for each entry the authors provide pertinent credits, various titles in different countries, a brief plot summary, and a brief critical assessment. The book would be even more useful if it had an index so that we could locate all the films directed by X or in which Y acts; still, it's a valuable reference tool.

I can't understand why some films were included and others omitted, but since that is true of any encyclopedia that one doesn't write oneself, the real question is balance. Here it is good. Most of the films are treated with quick-sketch acuteness, and where I disagree—about Handke's *The Left-Handed Woman*, for one instance—the disagreement occurs within a context of respect for the authors.

# *Robert Brustein on Theater*

## A Glorious Evening of Last Rites

The torrent of gratitude that critics and the public have been pouring over the choreographic genius behind *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* (Imperial Theatre) would suggest that he's discovered a new form. Actually, he's reconstructed an old one—the dance/ballet musical—a species of musical comedy invented by Agnes de Mille in *Oklahoma* and then perfected by Gower Champion, Bob Fosse, and Robbins himself, beginning with *On the Town* in 1944. The genre has been in eclipse for a number of years, since Robbins retired from the stage following *Fiddler on the Roof* in 1964. (It was later enlivened by Michael Bennett.) By abandoning Broadway at the height of his success in order to return to full-time work with the New York City Ballet, he managed to achieve something approaching mythical status, which may explain why the audience starts applauding this show even before the curtain goes up.

The title of his "new" show says it all. When theater marquees light up on the stage at the end with the titles of Robbins's shows throbbing in neon (a minor theft from *42nd Street*), you realize what a driving force he was in musical comedy, whether using his choreographic, directing, or conceptual skills. This Broadway really *did* belong to Robbins, and it was a lot more healthy as a result of his classical dance influence than the quasi-operatic cat-and-chandelier Broadway of Andrew Lloyd Webber. For one thing, you were likely, in a Robbins show, to look at the lineaments of the human form rather than at spectacular machinery, masks, or makeup. And you were treated to an infinite variety of style and movement, not just monotonous incantations of Puccini souped up with tremulous tonal climaxes.

Actually, the sets for the ten shows represented in *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, though designed by very gifted artists, are the tackiest thing in the evening (Boris Aronson's *Fiddler* excepted). But that's not important, because the designs serve as backgrounds for dance and song rather than as actors competing for audience attention. Furthermore, by abstracting the high moment of each show—generally the centerpiece dance number—Robbins manages to divert attention from the basic weakness of musical comedy, namely the book (here *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* is the exception), and emphasize the glories of its music and motion. To be sure, this is achieved at the cost of some jerkiness. None of the shows—not even *West Side Story*, which is represented by a 25-minute segment—is allowed to unravel in consecutive fashion. And as the evening whips us from New York in the 1940s (*On the Town*) to New York in the '20s (*Billion Dollar Baby*) to New York in the '50s (*West Side Story*), then back to Plautine Rome (*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*), turn-of-the-century American (*High Button Shoes*), Siam, (*The King and I*), fairyland (*Peter Pan*), and the Russian shtetl (*Fiddler on the Roof*)—before concluding with a reprise of *On the Town*—one is likely to feel imprisoned in a particularly cantankerous time-space machine incapable of setting down firmly in any historical period.

The best way to regard *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* is not as a Broadway musical but as a celebration of choreography, rather like a benefit evening at the New York State Theater. Even the synthetic overture is devoted to songs about dancing ("Music puts me in a trance,/ And I must dance or die") where the rhetorical question "Shall We Dance?" is immediately answered by the angular sailor ballets in *On the Town*. Although the most high-spirited number is "On a Sunday by the Sea" from *High Button Shoes*, with ballet music by Jule Styne, it is clear that Robbins was most consistently inspired by his collaboration with Leonard Bernstein.

It was their work on the ballet *Fancy Free* that eventually developed into *On the Town*, and the nervous, spasmodic, dynamic, oddly syncopated Bernstein music proved perfectly suited to the angular sliding, leaping, and somersaulting of Robbins's choreography. *On the Town* looks curiously innocent today—gobs and girls in the Big Apple—especially by contrast with the urban angst of *West Side Story*. Stephen Sondheim's lyrics for the later work brought a new sophistication to the musical (a quality Arthur Laurents's rather soupy book lacked), and it stimulated a new energy in Robbins, especially in the wonderful "America" number where jazz and Latin American rhythms combine in a frenetic Hispanic debate over the dubious attractions of San Juan. It could also stimulate a certain utopian sappiness, as in the sentimental dream sequence ("There's a Place For Us") when the Jets and Sharks stop fighting to hold hands, gaze into each other's eyes, and contemplate a future of love and peace instead of bicycle chains and ashcan lids.

It is in numbers like this, and to some extent in the finger-snapping rumble sequence, that Robbins's choreography tends to romanticize reality. *West Side Story* was never a convincing study of racial conflict or street violence, but its glamorized warriors of indeterminate origin make it look today like a dead artifact of liberal sociology, especially after freeway snipers, skinheads, teenage hustlers, crack wars, and movies like *Colors*. There are clearly some subjects that musicals don't handle very well—the choreographed pogrom in *Fiddler on the Roof* is another such, though Robbins has mercifully excluded it from the current show. He's much more comfortable adapting his energized vision to images of American innocence—the "Charleston" sequence in *Billion Dollar Baby*, for example, with its hoodlums in pin-striped suits, flappers in pearls, and swells in pink raccoon coats—or to images of



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American innocence seen through exotic eyes, such as the Siamese version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* ("The Small House of Uncle Thomas") in *The King and I*. In both these cases, Robbins follows Brecht's admonition to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar, often through use of techniques borrowed from Kabuki, Nō, and Balinese theater.

For Robbins's brilliance as a choreographer is partly due to his skill as a director. That is what distinguishes the opening number ("Comedy Tonight") of *A Funny Thing*, a contribution said to have saved George Abbott's show after its disastrous reception on the road (it employs the most comical use of a curtain since Picasso's *Desire Trapped By the Tail*). Robbins's directorial skill also distinguishes *Gypsy*'s "You Gotta Have A Gimmick," where the seedy strippers blow trumpets and display illuminated bras and G-strings in a bump-and-grind ballet. It is Robbins's knowledge of acting that makes Jason Alexander look like something more than a rubber stamp Zero Mostel as Pseudolus and Tevye, though he lacks Mostel's gargantuan talent. And it is Robbins's gift for histrionic dynamics that gives such performers as Robert La Fosse, Charlotte d'Amboise, Scott Wise, and the others such a powerful presence on stage when a lesser artist might have made them look like mere hoofers. Aside from "Mr. Monotony," an Irving Berlin number dropped from a couple of shows for what now appear to be perfectly good reasons, only the *Peter Pan* sequence fails to impress, largely because it depends more on (very expert) aerial technology than on situation, timing, and character.

*Jerome Robbins' Broadway* momentarily makes the musical comedy an American possession again—but at what a price! The piece cost $8 million to produce and was six months in rehearsal with 62 performers, 14 designers, and five producers, including the Shubert Organization and the Suntory Foundation. It will be years before they can recoup their investment, even at $55 a seat. We've come a long way from the "astronomical" prices bemoaned by Julian Marsh in *42nd Street* ("They're paying $4.40 a ticket out there!"). And while it's a tribute to Jerome Robbins's fabled reputation that he was allowed to spend so freely on what is effectively a homage to himself, the cost of the enterprise makes it clear why the American musical has become as extinct as the dodo bird and the woolly mammoth.

There are creative reasons, too. The great composers represented here—Morton Gould, Leonard Bernstein, Richard Rogers, Jule Styne, Moose Charlap, Irving Berlin, Jerry Bock—have all, with the exception of Stephen Sondheim, either died or retired from the stage, and so have the great choreographers. In the meantime, a passion for extravaganzas—probably to justify the exorbitant ticket prices—has replaced the clean, lithe leap of creative inspiration. *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* is a celebration of golden oldies, an exercise in nostalgia. It represents not so much a reawakening of the American musical as a great big fun-filled wake, a rousing ceremony of final rites.

**An open letter to a TV producer.**

# *Liberty, Equality, Absurdity*

**BY ROBERT DARNTON**

Dear Sir:

I admit I'm an Ivy League professor, but I don't think I'm a snob. When you asked me to review the television script about Napoleon and Josephine, I gladly agreed. I thought it would be fascinating to see a Hollywood version of the period I study. My studies also concern the history of popular culture; and so you offered me an opportunity to shape the culture being broadcast to millions of Americans. Your phone call sounded like a summons to put my monographs aside. Here was a chance to do something, from my small corner of the profession, about the quality of the history that reaches the general public. And, professors being as greedy as everyone else, I thought I might make some money.

Since you warned me that the script was for a "docudrama," I expected to find some fictitious dialogue; and I made an effort to be as unpedantic as a professor possibly could be. I was prepared for the worst. And on the very first page I found it:

**ROBERT DARNTON** is professor of history at Princeton University.


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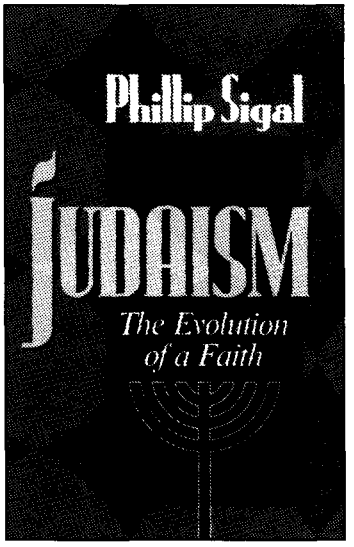


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CLOSE SHOT—SEVERED HEAD
Slack-mouthed in surprise. Neatly slashed veins and tendons trail bloodily from the head. The eyelids twitch.
MOB ROAR HEIGHTENED OFF STAGE.

Now, I would not deny that the French Revolution was a bloody affair. People really were guillotined, although most of them were counterrevolutionaries captured with weapons in hand behind the French lines during a desperate war that pitted the new republic against the combined forces of the old regimes of Europe. But your scriptwriter smears the screen with blood. When he can't find enough of it in standard histories, if he read any, he manufactures it.

Take, for example, Josephine's famous escape in a carriage from Austrian fire along Lake Garda during her visit to Bonaparte in the midst of the first Italian campaign. It was a near miss. I imagined that the scriptwriter would make the most of it. But he made most of it up. Instead of settling for Austrian shots falling so close that they kill a horse and one of Josephine's guards, he has the Austrians storm the carriage:

Josephine is petrified as the Austrian throws open the carriage door. He stops, surprised at the sight of a woman. Marchand (Josephine's guard) skewers him through the throat with his bayonet. Turn. Twist. And the Austrian falls forward into the carriage. Blood pumps from his jugular onto Josephine's clothes.

Confident, it seems, that he has tickled the appetite of a public that might otherwise be dozing in front of some history-as-it-actually-happened, your writer rips Josephine from the carriage and throws her onto a battlefield strewn with corpses. Night falls. She huddles beside Marchand, a fictitious substitute for General Junot, who actually rescued Josephine in a dashing manner but, unfortunately for him, without any shedding of blood. They hear some ruffians who are robbing corpses and killing the wounded, apparently for amusement. The camera dwells on one ruffian smashing a head and another plunging a knife into a helpless soldier. Josephine is about to scream; then she sinks to the ground:

JOSEPHINE'S POINT OF VIEW—ANGLE ON CORPSE
A disintegrating body. Her hand is on the torn face.

At this point, presumably, moms and dads all over the country wake up; and the kids, of course, are glued to the screen. History wasn't like this in the classroom.

I shouldn't imply that the script has nothing but violence. It also contains a good deal of sex. I expected that, too, because the Thermidorean period when Josephine became Bonaparte's mistress was a time of reaction against republican puritanism. Women really did swirl through balls in diaphanous gowns, picking up lovers and fortunes. Women in high society, that is: the poor suffered horribly from inflation and starvation. (The script does not bother with them, except in the early scenes when they provide "orgasmic" cheers for the guillotine.) But I was amazed at your writer's ability to invent pretexts for undressing Josephine, for presenting her to us "in a rumpled, post-coital state more lively than *triste*." (He seems to feel a need for French when he gets to sex, and spells it right. Non-libidinal words like "victoire" and "Tuileries" are beyond the range of his spelling, but of course television needn't concern itself with such details.)

The rawest sex is reserved for the supporting roles, perhaps because your writer's flair for dialogue falters when he takes the principal characters between the sheets:

BONAPARTE: I love you. I love you. I love you. Do you love me?

Where words fail, we get images, though sometimes only a glimpse, as in this clever camera shot:

The maid is in an open doorway. In her underclothes, and very little of those.

Best of all are the antics of Napoleon's sister Pauline, age 16. She takes a fancy to one of his generals, Charles-Victor Leclerc, during the Italian campaign. First we see her

. . . all but raping him publicly. Unbuttoning his uniform shirt, running her hand up and down his sheathed sword as her eyes roll in her head, biting his ear lobes.

Then she drags him behind a screen that is standing, unaccountably, in front of a vast throng of diners in a banqueting hall in Milan. In their passion, they knock the screen over, and the camera tells all:

ANGLE ON PAULINE AND LE CLERC

They are *in flagrante delicto*. Pauline's breasts are exposed. Le Clerc's pants are down to his knees. They are obviously rutting.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Why shouldn't history steal a page from *Penthouse*? It might brighten up the living room and give boys and girls a new taste for their studies. Why worry about factual details? Does it matter that your writer makes Robespierre tall (better for contrast with the stumpy Bonaparte, who is always striking his hand-in-the-tunic pose, as in the brandy ads)? Is it important that Bonaparte is called a captain when he was actually a brigadier general; or that Robespierre has him arrested for refusing a command in the Vendée, when he actually was imprisoned after the fall of Robespierre and declined the Vendée assignment later; or that Robespierre himself is presented as a kind of Hitler,



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the source of all evil and all guillotining, when in fact he was only one of 12 members of the Committee of Public Safety, a body that handled questions of war and politics, leaving the guillotine for the most part to the Committee of General Security and the Revolutionary Tribunal?

Avant-garde historians have derided the superficiality of "event history" for the last 40 years. Having turned their backs on "facticity," how can they complain if television gets things wrong? But I twinge, nonetheless, when I see the Bonapartes, who were fairly prosperous members of the Corsican nobility, presented as filthy, foul-mouthed peasants. By way of a glimpse at their home life, the camera shows Louis Bonaparte lugging a sack of turnips and Jerome chasing a rooster around their hovel. Their mother, the formidable *Madame Mère*, then seizes the fowl and snaps its neck, exclaiming: "This is how the mother of the great General Nabouglione Buonaparte, the pride of the blood, wrings a neck." It's a vivid scene. Why worry if it never took place? Neither did the confrontation scenes between Bonaparte and Robespierre, Bonaparte and Talleyrand, and Talleyrand and Madame de Staël? What does it matter, in the never-never land of docudramas?

Still, as the unfacts and non-events spin around me, I find I do begin to worry. A voice inside, some residue of professional conscience and pre-television culture, or a distant whisper from Leopold von Ranke, says that the French Revolution "as it actually happened" does matter, that the American public does deserve an accurate view of the Napoleonic era, that history should be saved from docudramas.

Without some concern for accuracy, history drifts loose from its moorings and, as your script demonstrates, anything goes. Consider your writer's treatment of revolutionary politics. He does not want to entangle the viewer in a complicated account of parties and coups, so he relegates politics to the background. I can understand that. He is writing a love story, not giving a lecture. But why can't the background be correct? I don't wince, not much at least, when the script has Bonaparte utter the famous phrase "whiff of grapeshot" during the attempted coup of 13 Vendémiaire (October 5, 1795)—and then repeat it, in case we missed it the first time round. It happens to be an English expression, invented at the high tide of Victorianism by Thomas Carlyle; but no matter. What *does* matter is that the grapeshot of the script destroys a mob of "unregenerate worshippers of Robespierre." In fact Bonaparte directed his cannon fire against insurrectionaries coming from the


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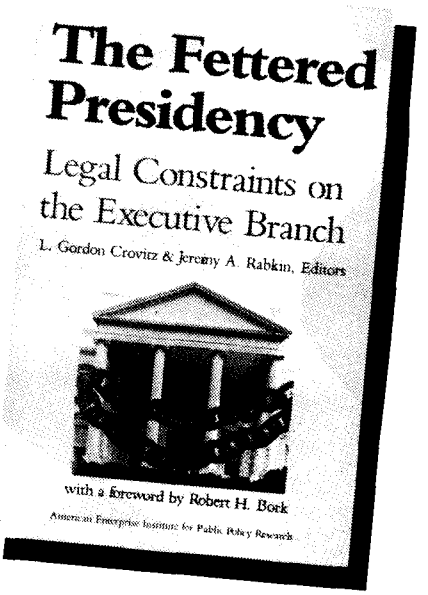
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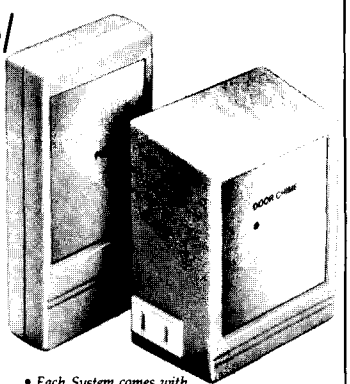


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very opposite end of the political spectrum: they were royalists, and he was protecting a still largely Jacobin Convention against an uprising of the right, not the left, as the Revolution moved out of the phase known as the Thermidorean Reaction and into a period of republican rule under the Directory.

Your script suggests, moreover, that the Directory followed immediately on the heels of Robespierre's overthrow on 9 Thermidor (July 27, 1794). It gives a wildly inaccurate account of Thermidor: Barras simply pulls a gun on Robespierre, smiling wickedly, and Robespierre realizes that the jig is up. Then it empties the prisons and presents Barras as the strong man of the Directory, as if the Thermidorean interlude had never occurred. Once the guillotine has dispatched Robespierre, Jacobinism ceases to exist, and we can frolic with the upper classes in their skintight trousers and see-through gowns.

I hope I don't sound demagogic if I suggest that the revolution involved the entire French nation. It was an uprising of the common people against an exploitative aristocracy, an absolute monarchy, and an obscurantist church. It pitted poor against rich, peasant against lord, burgher against nobleman. Divisions and contradictions ran through those lines of opposition. But the revolutionaries were united by a common commitment to the rights of man and the ideal of liberty, equality, fraternity.

For my part, I find those aspirations valid and moving, a crucial part of history "as it actually was." Your writer never mentions them. Instead of worrying about distinctions between left and right, between revolution and counterrevolution—which were questions of life and death for the revolutionaries—he blurs everything into the background. The revolution appears as nothing more than an "establishing shot, tilted angle" and a "mob roar, off stage." It is the revolution he might have read about in *A Tale of Two Cities* and thought he could translate into the idiom of "Dallas" and *Animal House*. It is, in short, a soap-opera revolution, full of sex and violence, signifying nothing.

Despite every effort to discard my tweed, I see that I am sounding professorial after all. As a historian, I hold with those who see history as an imaginative construct, as something that needs to be thought through and reworked endlessly. But I do not think it can be made into anything that strikes our fancy. We cannot ignore the facts, or spare ourselves the trouble of digging them up, simply because we hear that everything is "discourse." History can be done worse rather than better. The worst version of all, at least for a nation of television watchers, may be history as docudrama.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT DARNTON

# *The Occidental Tourist*

**BY ROBERT B. REICH**

## More Like Us: Making America Great Again by James Fallows

**(Houghton Mifflin, 245 pp., $18.95)**

Cultural stereotypes die hard. They are especially resilient in the face of perceived threats, like the commercial success of Japan. Many Americans would like to believe that the Japanese are inherently insular and racist, that they all act and think exactly alike, that they do whatever they are told to do, that they love nothing in life more than work. We Americans, by contrast, are open and tolerant, ruggedly individualistic, restlessly in search of a better life, forever vigilant against privilege and arbitrary authority. Japanese society is rigidly ordered, but anybody can make it in America. Thus, we have nothing to learn from them. We can solve our economic predicament through good old American grit and gumption.

There is a grain of truth to these myths; but only a grain. Japanese coherence and harmony are relatively new phenomena in a century marked by bitter struggles between the military and the large industrial groups, between tenant farmers and landlords, between industrial workers and employers. Social conflict in Japan has escalated periodically: after the financial panic of 1927, the invasion of Manchuria in 1932, the fascist attacks on capitalism in the 1930s, the war with China from 1937 to 1941, the Pacific war, the economic collapse of 1946, the post-Korean recession of 1954. In the 1950s Japanese workers staged crippling strikes that almost wrecked their fledgling automobile industry. Through much of that era, "Made in Japan" was synonymous with cheap, shoddy workmanship. As for national uniformity, even today many Japanese citizens feel more loyal to their region than to Japan as a whole, and take pride in regional differences that are far greater than those that distinguish our own states and regions.

As for America's self-image of openness and tolerance: we have only to gaze at our own record of public and private behavior toward Native Americans, blacks, Mexicans, Irish, Jews, and anyone even slightly sympathetic to communism. America's mythic individualism, moreover, disappeared at least three decades ago, when we first pondered the "man in the gray-flannel suit" and "the organization man"—those exemplary creatures of a bland, corporate culture—and fretted over "the lonely crowd" of conformists who inhabited our new, sprawling suburbs. In fact, there are few cultures more relentlessly homogeneous than America's, from McDonald's to shining McDonald's. And our distaste for privilege notwithstanding, we tolerate the largest gap between rich and poor of any industrialized nation (a gap that grows by the year), reinforced by exclusive zoning, private schools, and vast inner-city populations of poverty.

James Fallows, a correspondent for the *Atlantic* now stationed in East Asia, has written a provocative, puzzling, and faintly jingoistic book about these cultural stereotypes. Fallows tells us that Japan's economic strength derives from a culture so different from ours that we cannot emulate it, and should not even try. He asks us instead to examine what it is that makes America strong and gives our culture its unique identity. He wants us to live up to this idealized America by ridding ourselves of barriers that protect vested interests and discourage everyone else: professional licensing boards, standardized tests, stratified schools, and all the trappings of status and class. He seeks a more robust, entrepreneurial society in which anyone really can make it big.

These are noble sentiments. Fallows makes his case smoothly, casually, as if in conversation with a friend. Along the way he offers a fascinating collection of facts and anecdotes, ranging from the influence of the British colonial system on the Malay populations of East Asia to the recent upsurge in America of specialized magazines like *Gourmet* and *Yachting*. We learn, among other things, that one-



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eighth of the American Rhodes scholars of the 1940s went on to practice law, while fully a third of them do so now; that in 1921 the Harvard psychologist Robert Yerkes concluded, upon analyzing the test scores of Army inductees, that recent immigrants to the United States were overwhelmingly feeble-minded, but became more "normal" the longer they resided here; that until the arrival on our shores of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Fanny Trollope was the foreign visitor most annoyed by America's unruliness and lack of refinement. There are excursions into Fallows's family history—his father's move to California, his own experience with the draft—and stories about other upwardly mobile Americans, snippets of conversations overheard, letters from friends, ruminations, curiosities, legends, homilies, and much, much more.

Fallows's book is thoughtful, colorful, wide-ranging. But somehow the parts don't quite hang together. One seems to contradict another. And in the end it's not clear what Fallows wants us to conclude. At times he seems to believe America's mythological view of itself, and of Japan. In his early chapters he draws a sharp contrast, arguing in breathtaking generalizations that America is indeed a land of unbridled mobility and opportunity, and Japan indeed a land of obedience, insulation, and conformity. In America, "People are naturally energetic and creative"; we believe that "everyone should have a chance"; this country is "looser, less class bound, and less hierarchical than others." By contrast, "The Japanese culture is far more uniform than that of any other major country"; and "no other country in Asia has put quite as much emphasis on racial purity as Japan has."

Therefore it follows that we should not try to be like them, that we should build on our own strengths. But in the latter half of his book Fallows backtracks. No, we are not at all like the mythic view we have of ourselves. No, the Japanese are not as hierarchical and rigid as they seem. Since at least the turn of the century, America has become encrusted with special-interest protections and class barriers, while Japan is far more egalitarian. Fallows is as depressed by American education as he is impressed with Japanese education. "America's theory of intelligence writes off the bottom ranks," he writes with scorn; Japan's, by contrast, "is designed to make everyone rise to challenges." Japanese society is cohesive. American society has fragmented along ever more rigid class lines. He asks us to "revive the idea that America is one coherent society"—a sentiment that we "understood instinctively during World War II," when we were joined together in battle, just as the Japanese are joined together in commercial battle today.

Do we have something to learn from the Japanese, or don't we? Should we try to be more like us, or like the mythic images of us that we (and our political leaders) celebrate in songs and pledges and on national holidays? Fallows is confusing. But he is clear about one thing. He thinks that America's once and future greatness lies in flexibility and social mobility. And yet he never grapples with the ironic tension that exists between those two values, with the difficult fact that institutional flexibility can sometimes inhibit personal mobility.

In his discussion of the avenues of American reform, for example, he suggests that our schools could be improved if parents were given educational vouchers with which they could select the best school in their region to send their children. He expects that one result of such a system would be more competition among schools, which would lead to more innovation and flexibility. Yet he never mentions the other consequence, which haunts most discussions of educational vouchers: that the best schools will give priority to the best behaved and most motivated kids (who, in turn, are likely to come from higher-income households), and thereby consign the more difficult and less fortunate children to the worst schools. In other words, vouchers may increase educational flexibility, but simultaneously frustrate upward mobility.

Another example. Fallows makes no secret of his dislike for standardized tests, including civil service examinations. In fact, he doesn't much like the civil service system at all. He tells us that before the Civil War the spoils system—political patronage—was the "lubricant" that kept American politics and government running "with much churning and change." Once we began to choose public servants by test results, however, we created a "Confucian-like" process that rendered government far more rigid, less able to respond to citizens' immediate needs. The evident solution is to rid ourselves of the civil service and its exams, and to restore the old political machines.

But Fallows fails to acknowledge that the spoils system also made it harder for talented kids without connections, the ones who came from the wrong side of town or the wrong ethnic background, to enter public service. It blocked upward mobility based on merit. Standardized tests may be a terrible way to measure talent and ability, but at least they are


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better than patronage, to which talent and ability are completely irrelevant. Here, too, there is a trade-off between flexibility and upward mobility. Fallows doesn't discuss it.

Surely Fallows understands this trade-off. In fact, at one point he explicitly derides the spoils system for its stultifying impact on the ambitions of working-class Americans. He is explaining why the steelworkers of South Chicago had such difficulties after the mills began to shut down in late 1970s: why they and their families and neighbors failed to adapt, to move away, to make new lives for themselves. The reason, he tells us, is that their communities were dominated by "big, unwieldy institutions" like Chicago's political machine, which implicitly taught that "people should know their place." But why isn't Fallows reminded of this when, later in the book, he praises the spoils system for its flexibility? His failure to connect his two arguments gives them both a strange, disembodied quality.

## *Necklace*

An unassuming
compound, clamped
to its purpose:
to circle
the neck.
Yet *neck* is
a peg for hanging,
*lace* a snare
or noose.
These origins
lift the caught
traitor, the cutpurse
toward us a moment,
though they are mostly
lost. The term
narrows, grows encrusted
with time. Custom
strings baubles
on the blank roots.
Here are pearls,
the product
of a more refined
context. Action
turns to ornament,
the rub
of meaning glossed
through use. This
does not stop.
Even now
in the raw usage
of the townships
the neck is
laced:
the tire, ardent
with new purpose,
hangs on the peg.

**Don Bogen**

Even when Fallows emphasizes mobility, however, his argument is overly broad. Social mobility is an important cultural virtue, to be sure. A central theme of *More Like Us* is that ease of exit from unfortunate or unpleasant circumstances gives people a sense of control over their own destinies. "If Americans think they are trapped, cheated, stuck, or doomed, most do not try." Thus, warns Fallows, we should be vigilant against barriers to upward, as well as geographic, mobility.

Fair enough. But here again he proves too much. When exit is *too* easy—especially the exit of shareholders, creditors, and executives—the people left behind often feel trapped and cheated. One reason why so many Americans sense that they are not in control of their destinies, that their hard work is not rewarded, is because the companies for which they labor are little more than accumulations of financial assets forever on the loose. Thus layoffs, plant closings, hostile takeovers, leveraged buyouts, sell-offs, and sudden bankruptcies have become the order of the day. Nobody should be surprised that American workers are demoralized and suspicious. Why knock yourself out for 40 years when your real employers are a series of institutional investors that own your company's stock for minutes or hours at a time, and care only about whether its price will rise or fall in the interim?

The solution cannot be solely to make American labor more mobile. Regardless of how easy it may be for workers to pull up roots and find something else to do somewhere else—regardless of how much retraining they receive, how portable their pensions, how inexpensive their housing, how optimistic and exuberant their dispositions—capital will always be more mobile. As long as society is organized solely around the principle of ease of exit, therefore, there will be social costs to capital mobility. And working people, always relatively less mobile, will feel resentful.

Ease of exit can have another unfortunate consequence, too, which Fallows fails to acknowledge. As Albert Hirschman has noted in his masterful *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, when exit is too easy, people have no reason to commit themselves to one another. When difficulties arise, the most able people quickly leave. As a result, failing institutions cannot be reformed. Companies die, communities disintegrate. The social value of common commitment—manifested in the continuous reform of endangered institutions—is not something to which American capitalism pays a great deal of attention. Capitalism is founded upon the principle of exit, not upon the principle of loyalty. Still, American society has, from time to time, emphasized commo[illegible] commitment over individual exit. One has only to consider the civic republican tradition of the 19th century, or its more modern equivalent in team sports (although even here, the most able players seem more and more to prefer exit to loyalty). It's impossible to pick up a "how-to" book about management these days without coming across rhetorical flourishes about the importance of commonality, loyalty, and teamwork.

Fallows assumes that if exit is blocked or discouraged, institutions (and the people who inhabit them) will necessarily ossify. Barriers to mobility will induce passivity and dependence. He relies on several academics, including the psychologist David McClelland, author of *The Achieving Society* (1961), who found that successful cultures induced in their citizens a sense of almost limitless possibility for personal achievement. He also relies on the more recent work of Mancur Olson, a political economist who argues that economies decline when coalitions of producers gain protection for themselves through devices like licenses, regulations, and tariffs. These protections reduce competition, breed inefficiencies, slow the pace of innovation overall. In *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, Olson called upon America to rid itself of these encrustations. Fallows agrees.

But how does Fallows reconcile this line of argument with the exponential growth of Japan—a country that, he tells us himself, protects its producers and tolerates an extraordinary degree of collusion among them? Mobility is blocked. Consumers can't get what they need at the price they want it. Employees cannot easily leave their jobs. Entrepreneurs can't break into new markets. And yet, as Fallows readily admits, these barriers are a major source of Japan's commercial strength:

> The reluctance to act on price—to be consumers above all—is what . . . predisposes Japan to success in world trade. It's like the behavior any government expects from its soldiers and diplomats. If it has to get into a bidding war with the enemy for the loyalty of its troops, it is doomed. It needs to know that its people will refuse to act on price—won't sell secrets, won't defect just for cash.

In Japan, it would appear, barriers to mobility elicit common commitments. The commitments extend from the com-



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pany to the prefecture to the nation as a whole. Hirschman would have predicted as much. Because it's not easy for capital or labor to defect, their only option is to stick with the enterprise—or the community, or the nation—and try to improve it. (Fallows provides an illuminating anecdote: a Japanese specialist in English translated the adage "A rolling stone gathers no moss" as a warning to Japanese readers against lack of perseverance, but advised his readers that Americans read the proverb differently: "If you keep on moving and being active, you will not get rusty.")

Which theory is correct? Do exit barriers engender common commitments or do they breed passivity and resignation? Fallows is caught between two conflicting sets of ideas about how societies function best. But rather than sort out the two views, or adjudicate between the inconsistencies, he ignores them, or worse, he attributes them to immutable differences in "culture."

This debate is close to the heart of what separates modern liberals from modern conservatives. The conservative mind recognizes only two alternatives, exit or stagnation; and it opts for a society in which ambitious individuals can easily escape from unrewarding situations and strike out on their own. The liberal mind views exit more suspiciously, as a means of escaping from mutual commitment. It worries that easy exit might threaten the ability of communities and institutions to revitalize themselves. Mythic America illustrates the virtues of exit; mythic Japan, the virtues of common commitment. By asking Americans to be more like our mythic selves, Fallows promotes a solution to only half the problem.

# *In Praise of Perfume*

**BY HELEN VENDLER**

## The Inner Room
## by James Merrill

**(Knopf, 95 pp., $16.95, $8.95 paper)**

When James Merrill was awarded the Bollingen Prize by the Yale University Library 15 years ago, the *New York Times* huffily editorialized that there was "A World West of Yale." It reproved the library for once again rewarding "poetry that is literary [sic], private, traditional," and for insisting, through its awards, that "poetry is a hermetic cultivation of one's sensibility and a fastidious manipulation of received forms." "The academic grip on the Bollingen," the *Times* added darkly, "ought to be loosened." The myth of American Redskins and Anglophile Palefaces (Philip Rahv's terms) dies hard.

The poetry of the illiterate is as literary, of course, as the poetry of the literate, only more unconsciously so; it recites its pieties quite unaware that it has inherited them, through generations of magazine verse, from its predecessors. Only a poet who knows his forms is free to be free within them, just as only one who has cultivated his sensibility is not a victim to it. The editorial writer of the *Times* may have disliked poetry in general, or Merrill in particular. But behind the editorial lies the subliterate wish, immortalized by Marianne Moore, for a poetry "written in plain American that cats and dogs can read."

Who knows, Merrill himself may wish he had been born Walt Whitman. It may be every poet's dream to sing, in Yeats's words, the "song of the noble and the beggarman." But Merrill's gifts make him belong to the line of Herbert, Pope, James, and Mallarmé—the line of writers interested in intricacy of form, and teasing obliqueness of content. The other line of writers—Bunyan, Wordsworth, Frost—use what we call the plain style, or ordinary language, or the words of "a man speaking to men." These latter phrases have always been one rallying point for poetry; but against them there are other rally cries: "Sweet phrases, lovely metaphors, honey of language" (to use Herbert's caressing words).

Merrill is entirely conscious that he belongs among the "Parnassians" of poetry, for whom consonants are as important as sense. Is he, are they, the aristocrats of a perpetual operatic ancien régime, forever suspiciously regarded by the solid groundlings of language, the repository of common meaning? Here is "The Parnassians," Merrill's ironic sonnet on his own refined poetic practice, uttered, one might almost say, in the resentful voice of the *Times*:

> Theirs was a language within ours, a loge
> Hidden by bee-stitched hangings from the herd.
> The mere exchanged glance between word and word
> Took easily the place, the privilege
> Of utterance. Here therefore all was tact.
> Pairs at first blush ill-matched, like *turd* and *monstrance*,
> Tracing their cousinage through consonants,
> Communed, ecstatic, through the long entr'acte.
>
> Without our common meanings, though, that world
> Would have slid headlong to apocalypse.
> We'd built the Opera, changed the scenery, trod
> Grapes for the bubbling flutes mild fingers twirled;
> As footmen, by no eyelid's twitch betrayed
> Our scorn and sound investment of their tips.

If it is true that to a Parnassian the gestures of populist poetry seem gross, heavy-footed, ugly—or lax, vacant, repetitive—it is equally true that to those who like broad explicit moral strokes or solid romance, "Parnassian" writing will seem precious, arch, "knowing," decadent. And since every style has the defects of its qualities, the Parnassian style, when it doesn't come off, *is* overrefined and self-conscious. (The populist style, when *it* doesn't come off, is bathetic, sensationalist, sentimental.)

Artists know the pitfalls of their chosen style at least as well as their critics do, and Merrill is no exception. His footman-speaker articulates every criticism that has been aimed at his maker's style: it is, he says, always in danger of a willed seclusion, tempted to adopt a privileged etiquette almost Japanese in its elaboration, refining its form into its smallest harmonies (the conjunction, for example, of "t" and "r"), no matter how bizarre the consequent content (a turd-monstrance). It is in danger, always, of forgetting where the ladders to its champagne-loges start: in the "common meanings" of earth and action. Would there ever be the double-meaning "tips" for the footmen, on the other hand, were it not for the Parnassian's insights?

Merrill must find it depressing to see how quickly the external features of his Parnassian style have been copied—to behold, in the poems of his imitators, clever rhymes, quirky stanzas, winsome asides, deflected syntax, jeweled effects—without anyone at home inside, so to speak, without a ghost in the machine. These repellent displays are now everywhere in the poetry journals. Merrill's intimacy of address, his conversational narrations, are reproduced by poets with no sense of intimacy and no stories to



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tell. And so, to describe Merrill, it is no longer enough (as it might once have been) to point out the features of his original and beautiful style. It is necessary to go further, to inquire into the inner motives that engender such a style, those very motives missing from the lifeless copyists of manner.

In trying to approach these motives, I will pass over the less steady poems in this volume, those where some tonal strain suggests a less than successful agreement between motive and manner. Some of these poems are attempts to find adequate art forms for an AIDS elegy. In one of them the poet says, "I need a form of conscious evasion," and perhaps both the consciousness and the evasion are in these instances enemies of aesthetic success.

I would rather look at poems where Merrill is at home in his motives, and nothing is too conscious or too evasive. I return to my original question: If we imagine poetic authenticity to be proved by a style that, by its surface, creates a convincing interior, then what is the inferred interior in Merrill, and how does it match, or generate, the style? My example for this purpose is Merrill's exquisite poem (from his title sequence) about adult erotic experience (the implied contrast is with that youthful form of sex that never opens its rapturously closed eyes or puts its dazzled experience into words). The young initiate is only a lover; but the adult writer, yielding his senses one by one to sex, is both "actor and lover":

> Actor and lover contemplate the act
> So-called of darkness: touch that wrestles tact,
>
> Bedsprings whose babble drowns the hearing, sight
> That lids itself, gone underground. Torchlight
>
> Gliding down narrow redly glimmering veins,
> Cell by cell the celebrant attains
>
> A chamber where arcane translucences
> Of god-as-mortal bring him to his knees.
>
> Words, words. Yet these and others (to be "tarred"
> And "set alight" crosswise by "Nero's guard")
>
> Choreograph the passage from complex
> Clairvoyance to some ultimate blind *x*,
>
> Raw luster, rendering its human guise.
> The lover shuts, the actor lifts his eyes.

An analysis of motive here will initially find a thronging set of "causes" of

DRAWING BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Merrill's language: literary allusion (the act of darkness); etymological pun (touch, [tactile], tact); synesthesia (babble drowns hearing); and narrative (sight that goes underground). Then begins a cinematic fantasy of an anatomical journey, in which sensuality (redly glimmering veins), religion (the cells of a celebrant worshiping a god), science (a descent cell by cell), and inquiry (attaining a chamber, finding something arcane) are conjoined.

I stop here to say that gradually this style is sketching a person—one who remembers Christian injunctions against sex (the act of darkness) even as he also recalls pagan worship of Eros (the god as mortal), one who sees himself both as the celebrant of a mystery and as the investigator of a labyrinth, one who has not forgotten biology in his theology of love. He is someone capable of self-obliteration, almost, falling to his knees. At the same time, he is impatient with his own description of sexual exploration ("Words, words"). Hating his own compulsion to choreograph sex in words, he re-enacts the pagan/Christian antithesis by turning his self-censor into Nero's guard crucifying troublesome Christian presences.

Believable motives in poetry are more believable if we see the constructed self do over again what we have just seen him doing. And that is what happens here: the "actor" part of the personality, conscious and open-eyed, trying to understand and track experience, has been gradually undermined by the sexual journey, and has fallen on his knees, overcome. He has reacted to this with an abrupt awakening—"Words, words"—and some brisk executions. But even in retrospect, even admitting his wish to annotate feeling through words, he is once again overpowered by blind sexual immersion, as the words trace a second time the passage "from complex clairvoyance to some ultimate blind *x*"—where *x* ("raw luster") stands for the moment when he falls to his knees, all lover. The last line sums up, in a third phrasing, the twice-enacted narrative of this constructed self: "The lover shuts, the actor lifts his eyes."

An illusionistic poem would want simply to reproduce, once, the journey to the blind *x*. It would take its reader along, and reader and writer would fall to their knees in the chamber, and that would be that. In refusing such an illusionistic "inside" effect, Merrill's poem suggests that one is always, in adulthood, in one's prostrations to Eros, an ironizing spectator of oneself-as-actor. The lady sawed in half by the magician and miraculously



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restored, in Merrill's earlier "Yannina," stands for the same "scissoring and mending" by which we are at once enthusiasts and ironists. It is hard to say whether the enthusiast is the ironizer of the ironist, or vice versa. It is certain that a separation of irony from enthusiasm would vitiate any poem that wanted to claim an adult stance for itself.

The coherence of the behavior tracked in the first part, repeated in the second part, and summarized in the closing part of this poem is the guarantee that a single imagined subjectivity inhabits the poem. Merrill's imitators strew their stanzas with allusions and puns, with an alternation of the sensual and the social, the "raw" words and the "clairvoyant" words, in an utterly arbitrary way. No inner coherence, plausibly implied narrative generates the ornamental gingerbread of their lines. Merrill, by contrast, builds up from small cross-hatchings, as an etcher might, regions of lights and darks that ultimately cohere into a personal visual field.

These days Merrill's poems tend to bear death within them. At the same time, his sexual intensity—often diffused into some symbol of burgeoning life, here most strikingly a morning glory—is heightened. In childhood, says the morning glory poem (dedicated to Howard Moss), we were like flowers wholly tuned to primal energy, aspiring (as Merrill's prolonged syntax suggests) to reciprocity with the cosmos: we experienced

> The single day, at six or seven,
> When each was little but a wide-ribbed heaven
> Tuned wholly to the cosmic one
> Of pulsing depths, blue deepest overhead,
> And where, though busy Eros visited,
> All we knew, all we lived for, was the Sun.

Inside the morning glory poem lies a narrative of the murder, in Greece, of a homosexual acquaintance. Merrill's willingness to encapsulate savagery in the midst of his idylls is another trait that distinguishes him from his cautious imitators. He is more disabused than they are, and his hawklike eye watches and grasps the flaws in the world. Even in Rome, passing the Castel Sant'Angelo, he sees "an Angel's / Bird-of-prey shadow rippling / Down from his ramparts."

And if he is unwilling to relinquish the blind passion proper to youth, he is not about to hide the humiliating losses proper to age. One of the most intricately "plotted" poems here is "Losing the Marbles": it is about forgetfulness as a fact of life as one turns the corner from middle age into age *tout court*. The poem opens with pleasantries, not so pleasant, about a calendar mislaid and names forgotten; and then we come to Merrill's central symbol of the loss of cortical cells. A poem-manuscript has been rained on, and some of its words obliterated. On its half-unreadable "papyrus," the poem looks like one of Sappho's enigmatic fragments:

> body, favorite
> gleaned, at the
> vital
> frenzy—

—and so on, for seven stanzas. The game is to deduce what the poem's lost cells may have been holding; and we instinctively reach to close the gap, not even knowing the meter. Might it be,

> O body, favorite of the Muses,
> Field once gleaned, what theft has borne
> Your ripeness off? My vital lyre
> Has lost its frenzy—what can adorn . . .

We become, with Merrill, scholars of the papyrus, hunters for lost words—and find ourselves (in a mockery of classical scholarly reconstructions) wholly mistaken. With the aid of his unreliable memory, Merrill reconstructs his destroyed poem, and it turns out to be an ode in sapphics, of which the first stanza, reclaimed, reads:

> The body, favorite trope of our youthful poets . . .
> With it they gleaned, as at the sibyl's tripod,
> insight too prompt and vital for words.
> Her sleepless frenzy—

Later in the poem, Merrill suggests that one who interprets for an aphasic friend, thereby sustaining the possibility of community, is engaging in a creative act comparable to deducing from a single dactyl the potential for the ode:

> Who gazed into the wrack till
> Inspiration glowed,
> Deducing from one dactyl
> The handmaiden, the ode?
>
> Or when aphasia skewered
> The world upon a word,
> Who was the friend, the steward,
> Who bent his head, inferred
>
> Then filled the sorry spaces
> With pattern and intent,
> A syntax of lit faces
> From the impediment?

"Losing the Marbles" concludes with a regretful Keatsian sweetness. As a present on his birthday, Merrill tells us, he received from "the friend whose kiss that morning woke me" a pouch of marbles that he has "embedded at random in the deck-slats / Around the pool," that "oubliette." At night they sparkle "tinily underfoot,"

> As though the very
> Here and now were becoming a kind of heaven
> To sit in, talking, largely mindless of
> The risen, cloudy brilliances above.


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Because Merrill has found a way to put everything from murder to mindlessness into a style that could have been purely decorative, the style itself has stretched its possibilities with each successive volume. Just as the flat motifs that Matisse found in Muslim decorative art became ingredients, on his canvases, of striking atmospheres of sensation, so puns, ambiguities, and the stanzaic shapes of English expand and grow when they are incorporated into Merrill's handsomest and most ambitious poems.

It is no accident that the verse play included in this volume, "The Image Maker," gives us a portrait of the poet as *santero*, a Caribbean fashioner of *santos*, domestic saint figures who combine Yoruba lore and Roman Catholicism. To intuit the explicit obverse and hidden reverse of community belief, and carve these into images identified by their style as coming from one man's hand—this is what Merrill offers as an implicit definition of his aim. The "mortal weariness" of this task—the reconstitution of life in art—shows through in an excellent poem called (after the meal described within it) "Ginger Beef." In it, Merrill finds a more ironic symbol for his art, the titular culinary pièce de résistance, ready to be served:

> Lift from the crock, let stand;
> Then chill, trim, slice and recompose
> Within its essence, clarified topaz.

Not, perhaps, to everyone's taste. But a feat—trimmed, sliced, recomposed, clarified. Especially clarified.

**HELEN VENDLER** is Kenan Professor of English at Harvard. She is currently working on a commentary on Shakespeare's sonnets.

# *Haunted by History*

**BY LEON BOTSTEIN**

## The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity by Charles S. Maier

**(Harvard University Press, 240 pp., $22.50)**

Charles Maier's fine book could not have appeared at a more propitious time. It is a thorough and sensitive reflection on the "historian's conflict" about the character and significance of Nazism that erupted in West Germany in 1986. What began as a debate among scholars within the German university system ended up as a national controversy waged in the daily press. The political ramifications were made dramatically clear last November, by the reaction to Phillipp Jenninger's speech to the Bundestag on the 50th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*. The speech was a decent and candid description of the popularity of the Nazi agenda among Germans. Jenninger rehearsed, by the use of Nazi jargon itself, the justifications for the acts of the Nazi regime, and confessed the general passivity to, and widespread embrace of, the crimes against the Jews. The Speaker of the Bundestag sought to make vivid the enthusiasm that Germans displayed for what he described as "the departure from all humanitarian ideas . . . the deliberate and desired descent into barbarism." Yet the speech was attacked.

Why did the members of the opposition to the conservative Kohl government walk out on this accurate and sensitive statement, and President Weizsäcker look on "in fury," and Willy Brandt "put his head in his hands," as the *Sunday Times* of London reported? The explanation may rest in the complex patterns of communication among Germans today on the matter of Nazism. Jenninger is a member of the same generation as Jürgen Habermas, Andreas Hillgruber, and Ernst Nolte, three leading protagonists in the "historians' conflict." The psychological significance of Nazism for Jenninger's generation is quite different from its meaning for those who were responsible adults in the 1930s and 1940s, or for those born near the end of the war or after.

This generation, whose members are in their 50s and 60s, is at the height of its political, economic, and intellectual influence. They were mostly too young to have shared in the responsibility for the events, and therefore they cannot be assigned the guilt of collaboration. But they are old enough to have grown up under the spell of Hitlerism. Their problem is the massive disjunction, the terrific trauma, of having to denounce as adults the ideals and the values that were assiduously cultivated in childhood. After 1945, during adolescence and early adulthood, this generation was asked to think and act in opposition to the dreams, the ideals, and the fantasies on which it had been nurtured.

An impartial reader can find little to quarrel with in Jenninger's address. But his German audience clearly is not impartial, and could not tolerate the psychically honest and almost naive acknowledgment that the world of their youth was evil. Their damaged nostalgia for their childhood was at odds with their adult convictions. Jenninger's honest search for a way to mourn failed. The audience turned on him for not using the nearly meaningless official formulas of remorse, and the sterile and familiar ritual of admissions of responsibility and guilt. Unwittingly, then, he proved his point, that the memory of the popularity and the allure of Nazism is essential to an honest life in Germany.

Charles Maier ably provides the proper background not only to the Jenninger affair, but more generally to the understanding of how Germans are still trying to integrate the Third Reich into a vision of a democratic future, into a cohesive national identity for Germany. Maier shows that the West German search for an adequate historical analysis of the Nazi past has struggled against amnesia and avoidance. His focus is on how recent German intellectuals and scholars have attempted to reconcile the ethical imperatives to condemn barbarism and collaboration with adherence to the modern conventions of professionalism, which call not only for critical distance, but also for flexible empathy with regard to the subject matter. The irony, in Germany and elsewhere, is that the immense amount of serious writing about Nazism and the Holocaust (not to speak of the efforts at popularization) notwithstanding, we still fear that a culture of indifference will swamp the factuality of the Third Reich and the Holocaust.

The historian's conflict erupted in Germany in July 1986, when Habermas wrote an article in *Die Zeit* titled "A Form of Guilt Liquidation: The Apologetic Tendencies in German Modern Historical Writing." Habermas challenged a book by Hillgruber, one of Germany's leading specialists on the politics and military affairs of the Nazi era, as well as recent articles by two leading scholars, Nolte and Michael Stürmer. Habermas exposed the emergence of an apologetic revisionism (buttressed by the Bitburg controversy, the revival of the idea of *Mitteleuropa*, and the triumph of neoconservatism in Germany, Britain, and the



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United States in the 1980s) according to which the mass murder of six million Jews should cease to be a determining and crippling factor in German political discourse. For the sake of Germany's future, the revisionists argue, the Holocaust needed finally to be "historicized" and "contextualized." The Holocaust, they say, was not unique.

Moreover, the exclusive focus on the Jews and other concentration camp victims represents a limiting and subjective judgment that obscures other valid scholarly approaches. Hillgruber, for example, treats the fact that the extermination of the Jews was pursued by the Nazis to the very end (even though the Final Solution was draining essential resources away from the Eastern front) side by side with the fact that the German military defense sought to protect the historic communities of Eastern Germany. Had the Russian advance that liberated the remnant of concentration camp survivors not been so rapid or so successful, fewer civilian Germans in the East would have been killed or raped and displaced. Hillgruber's writing was poignant and detailed in describing the plight of the defenseless German citizen in need of protection by the Wehrmacht; treating the Holocaust, by contrast, he displayed a detached tone of abstraction.

Nolte argued, furthermore, that Hitler learned about mass murder from Stalin. Was not the Gulag and the murder of kulaks a historical precedent? Do we not now know that Stalin murdered more people than Hitler? Did America not do in Vietnam something similar to what Hitler did in Europe? And does not the policy of Israel toward the Palestinians suggest that Germany has no monopoly on the abuse of power in modern times? Nolte claimed that there is tacit censorship at work within the university (fueled by the academic left since 1968) against unpopular but legitimate issues of scholarly discourse. Shouldn't one be allowed to challenge the facile acceptance of the uniqueness of Nazism and the validity of the scholarly obsession with the mass murder of the Jews?

Maier observes that implicit in many of the new revisionist arguments were echoes of the familiar notion that Nazism was merely one facet of the European phenomenon of fascism, that it was a reaction to the threat of communism. Thus revisionism provides the historical backing for the neoconservative campaign to restore to Germany after 1968 a healthy national pride, and therefore a firmer allegiance to the West. The revisionist arguments justify themselves as the only alternatives to the claims of the German left that left-wing politics were the exclusive and indispensable means for coming to terms with the Nazi era.

Maier's thorough and subtle account shows how much is gravely wrong with the revisionist claims. The mantle of free inquiry and open discourse has been misappropriated. Habermas acted with courage; he was right to recognize falsehood and ideology in the work of the revisionists. Nolte, for example, is simply wrong: Hitler did not derive his genocidal methods from Stalin and embrace genocide as some sort of defensive strategy. To compare the aggregate number of innocent victims is to use statistics to obscure the special horror of the murder of the smaller sum. The Gulag, the ravages of war, and the use of police torture all possess premodern historical precedents: Stalin extended 19th-century czarist practices, in a grotesque act of modernization. But the Holocaust was a radical act of discontinuity. From the Nuremberg Laws to the ovens, the instruments of Germany's war against the Jews, including the camouflage of mass murder through the perversion of language and the ordinary habits of bureaucracy and efficiency, were inventions of Nazism and its pseudoscientific racism. The suffering of the Germans in the East in 1944 and 1945 was a consequence of the conduct of war between nations, of the revenge taken by soldiers whose own land and people had been devastated in 1941 and 1942. The Nazi persecution of the Jews was not, as Nolte implies, the consequence of strategic considerations.

Why did this scandalous revisionism develop in the 1980s? Who does it speak for? Why have the bizarre and false frameworks and arguments of Nolte, Hillgruber, Hildrebrand, and Stürmer gained the respectability of Germany's most prestigious daily paper, and received support among intellectuals who consider themselves staunch defenders of West Germany's postwar democracy and role in NATO? Maier tackles these issues with exemplary care. He links the *Historikerstreit* properly to efforts in West Germany to establish new public museums dedicated to German history. According to the conservatives, the Third Reich must be presented as part of the German past without requiring that the 19th century be discredited. The history of Germany before 1918 must be restored to West Germany as a constructive instrument for a sense of national unity, and not remain an unusable past preceding a shameful past. For this reason, the Weimar period also is undergoing revision. Its culture, once idealized, particularly in the '60s,


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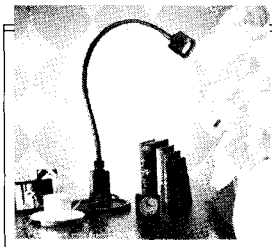

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for creativity spurred by freedom and democracy, is viewed in conservative quarters as corrupt, relativistic, and degenerate; as a dissolute world ready-made to make Hitler's polemics believable. The Weimar Republic, not the militaristic monarchy of Wilheim II, might take first place in the contest for the blame for Hitler's world.

The revisionists have used history writing as a means to reassert an anti-socialist domestic political agenda, to reaffirm anti-communism as central to West Germany, to redress the politicization of academic and intellectual life by the left that, they claim, occurred after 1968. Maier is acutely aware of the role in the *Historikerstreit* played by academic politics, and follows the scars left by the conflicts of 1968. As Maier points out, Habermas is among those German intellectuals for whom the immediate post-war task was to reconnect German thought and culture with the West, to introduce the political and philosophical traditions of America and England into the new German democracy. This meant the reintegration of the traditions that left Europe with the emigration in the 1930s (such as the critical theory tradition of the Frankfurt School); of the Max Weber of C. Wright Mills and Talcott Parson; of the Freud of the Anglo-American psychoanalytic movements; of American pragmatism, American social science, and the pedagogical progressivism of Dewey and his followers.

For Habermas, 1968 was in part a generational challenge to the many continuities from the Nazi era that survived intact in the 1950s: a healthy moment in the reconstruction of Germany. The radicalism of the 1960s, despite its excesses, was a measure of how much remained to be done in the creation of genuine democracy in Germany, in the confrontation with the Nazi legacy in culture and politics. Maier brilliantly links Habermas's attack to his social theory and its implications for the politics of West Germany. Habermas argues against neoconservatism of any sort, against traditional patriotic allegiances in modern nation-states, for constitutionalism, pluralism, social justice, and the rule of law. The revisionists seek to restore atavistic loyalties to language, race, homeland, and a common history. Maier wonders soberly whether the values championed by Habermas can withstand the lure of nostalgia and the traditional sense of national community.

Some of the background to the *Historikerstreit* will have a surprisingly familiar ring to American readers. There is a reaction in the United States similar to that going on in Germany among conservatives to a perceived domination of academic discourse since the 1960s by the left. Neoconservatism in Germany differs from its American counterpart, however, in its domestic and geopolitical roots. In Germany anti-communism has been the persistent conservative justification for the fascist past; and German conservatism was staunchly opposed to democracy. Neoconservatism in Germany, moreover, evokes the dilemma of the two Germanys. Integral to much of 19th-century German conservative and nationalist thought was the idea that Germany had a crucial hegemonic cultural and political role as defender, in "middle Europe" against Russian (read: Slavic, eastern) barbarism and an Anglo-French mixture of cold rationalism and effete aestheticism.

The *Historikerstreit* occurred at a time of cultural malaise in Germany, despite economic success; and it was a rude response to the political complacency that was left in the wake of the bankruptcy of radical politics. Years of popular and commercial abuse of the Holocaust also generated a reaction, and made serious historical and ethical reflection harder. The inescapable conclusion of Maier's fine book, and more generally of the *Historikerstreit*, is that the interpretations of historians will remain a vital factor in the political future of West Germany. Will historians have memory serve renewal with ethical and political responsibility? Or will they "normalize" the Nazi past? As Maier shows, rarely has the fate of a society depended so much on the moral and methodological probity of historians.

**LEON BOTSTEIN** is president of Bard College.

# The Outcast

**BY PEARL K. BELL**

## Baumgartner's Bombay by Anita Desai

**(Knopf, 230 pp., $18.95)**

At a time when so many writers confine themselves like turtles within their shells to the minutiae of private experience, unable to extend mind or metaphor beyond the predictable epiphanies of self-involvement, the work of Anita Desai is an illumination and a blessing. Her novels are quite short, but they convey a sharply detailed sense of the tangled complexities of Indian society, and an intimate view of the tug and pull of Indian family life, that tightly woven fabric of necessity, sustenance, and resentment.

Within the vividly defined strata of the urban world where much of her fiction is set, Desai's men and women are stalked by various demons of desolation: loneliness, thwarted ambition, humiliating poverty. The disappointments and frustrated longings of the people filtered through Desai's imagination are all the more poignant because her remarkable sense of place and atmosphere renders the world that contains them with such tangible immediacy. The clamor of the urban life swirling around her unhappy poets and teachers, husbands and wives, comes alive through details that are vivid enough to touch and smell and hear and taste.

Many of her characters feel that they have been buffeted with heartless indifference by forces they could neither control nor change: family obligations, bad luck, the upheavals of India's partition. They believe that they were meant for better things than the dusty resignation that enshrouds them. The ache of loneliness in the midst of some of the most thickly peopled places on earth recurs like a lament in Desai's novels and stories.

In *Clear Light of Day* (1980), the unhappy spinster Bimla is mired in the shabby decline of a once prosperous family of Old Delhi. The handsome and gifted brother she adored has rejected his family, religion, and literary aspirations for an opportunistic marriage to a Muslim heiress. A younger, prettier sister lives abroad, and the unceasing burdens of responsibility for a crumbling house and a retarded brother have soured the once lively Bimla into a self-pitying middle-aged scold. The failed poet Deven of *In Custody* (1987) cannot reconcile the mean reality of his days—he is a miserably paid teacher at a third-rate college in Mirpore, a town that "spared no effort to give an impression of total aridity"—with his ardent romantic yearning for a life devoted to the divine perfection of



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Urdu poetry. When he is offered the chance to interview the towering genius of that tradition for a literary magazine, the project turns to ashes as his every hope and effort are inexorably wrecked by his own bumbling timidity, the all-but-senile poet's erratic cooperation, and the scoundrels who cheat and frustrate poor Deven's every move.

Even when lonely isolation has been deliberately sought, as it is by the aged widow Nanda Kaul in *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), it turns into a nightmare. The icy old woman retreats in her final years to a house perched high in the Simla hills, treasuring her solitude as the long-overdue reward for her many years as a wife and mother clawed by the demands of others. Grudgingly, she agrees to let a troubled great-granddaughter spend the summer, and scarcely hides her irritation when an impoverished old friend invites herself for tea. But because the capacity for affection and sympathy has atrophied in this self-centered old woman, these intrusions from outside end in disaster. The child, more seriously disturbed than her great-grandmother had bothered to notice, sets a fire that devastates the entire mountain. The old friend, who should not have been allowed to stumble home in the dark, is murdered. Too late, the old woman realizes the damage that moral desiccation can do.

Yet in all of Desai's novels, she never loses sight of the huge and tumultuous Indian worlds in which individual bleakness and tragedy are embedded. There is a Dickensian rush and tumble to her portrayals of the bazaars, the crowded streets, the packed houses of an Indian metropolis. Words become things in this picture of a dilapidated building in Calcutta overflowing with people and movement and noise:

> There were always rows of supine bodies covered with white sheets so that they had the appearance of corpses in their shrouds but were only people lying in rows outside the house and its once gracious, now decayed portico—those who slept in the day were laborers who worked on night shifts, and those who slept at night were families that lived in the cracks and crevices of the building like so many rats, or lice. . . . Within the walls, sewing machines whirred, typewriters clacked, printing presses thumped, motor mechanics hammered at rusting automobiles, paint was splattered on tin and wood, chickens were plucked and slaughtered and, all the time, the single tap in the courtyard ran and ran over slabs of green and shining stones.

With equally concentrated lucidity, Desai can summon up the blazing colors and insistent cries of birds, the pungent and silky flamboyance of tropical flora, the whirling grit of a dust storm, and that immovable presence of the protracted Indian summer—the heat. Everyone who writes about India regards the heat as the supreme challenge to their verbal power, the way the heat suffocates and blinds. But Desai, who sees the merciless eye of the sun as "an assault, a violence," can make us, in the dead of an American winter, sweat as we read.

Born and raised in India, Desai has an unusual heritage: she is the daughter of a German mother and Bengali father. In *Baumgartner's Bombay*, her new novel, she has drawn from both wellsprings of her ancestry, and for the first time she has placed a European, rather than an Indian, at the heart of her story.

Hugo Baumgartner is a German Jewish refugee who has been stranded in India for the better part of 50 years—"stranded," because he has been in India, but not of it, throughout those decades. Sent east, not west, by a quirk of circumstance when he fled Hitler's Germany, Baumgartner is the loneliest, saddest, most severely dislocated of Desai's fictional creatures, a permanent outsider who never masters any local language, has no interest in seeing the holy city of Benares, feels no urge to enter a temple or an ashram, so absolute is his withdrawal from the alien surround.

We encounter Baumgartner as a weary old man, shuffling along a street in Bombay, resigned to the dwindling of his life into a rather peaceful gray blur. A man (apparently) without qualities, he knows he has never been "a part of the mainstream," and he long ago recognized the drab truth that "he did not belong to the radiant, the triumphant of the world." But the unheroic Baumgartner is also a representative man, the German Jew to whom things happen, powerless to resist the evil wind that swept him like a vagrant weed from Berlin to India. Anesthetized by convulsions and losses, he has through most of his adult years belonged nowhere, a man without family or country.

In the Berlin of his youth, the only child of prosperous parents, it had not occurred to Hugo that he did not belong in Germany, that "his darkness had marked him the Jew, *der Jude*." With the rise of Hitler, the devastations come with brutal rapidity. His father commits suicide when he loses his furniture business. Hugo and his gentle mother, who loves Schubert and Goethe and can't understand why Germans are being so horrible to other Germans, are evicted from their elegant apartment. When her son is offered a job with a timber merchant in Calcutta, Hugo's mother refuses to go with him to a land she imagines full of snakes and tigers. In India, spurred by the dream that his mother will soon join him, Hugo does well until the war, when the British, who can see no difference between German refugees and Nazi mountaineers, pack him off to an internment camp as an enemy alien. And there he rots for the next six years, waiting and waiting for news of his mother that never arrives.

On his release Baumgartner learns, from faded postcards his landlord neglected to forward, that his mother perished in one of the death camps. Now there is nothing and nobody to return to, and India will hold him forever. Though he recoils from the rioting and the bloodshed during the time of partition, he remains on the fringe, clinging to the anonymous safety of his foreignness. Through the kindness of an Indian businessman, he finds work in Bombay, but it hardly matters what city he lives in; to Baumgartner all of India is the same, the


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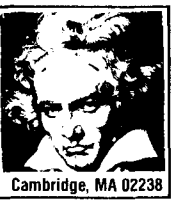

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strange land where he will never feel at home.

In his mildly contented old age, "Mr. Bommgarter," as the Indians call him, has settled into comfortable shabbiness, and spends much of his time cadging scraps from a nearby café for the brood of maimed and motherless cats he has rescued from the gutters of Bombay. Timid and passive, locked inside the protective shell of an unassimilable *firanghi* (foreigner), he averts his eyes from such disturbing sights as the pauper family living on the pavement outside his apartment. His only friend is the raucous Lotte, another German who was cast adrift in India before the war. Kept for years by a rich Indian lover, she is now a fat and hysterical drunk reduced to a seedy room. But Baumgartner finds it soothing to speak his mother tongue once in a while.

By now the old man feels himself to be neither German nor Indian, just a long-lived fly trapped in the limbo of exile, but he discovers one day that the country he fled so many years ago has not finished with him, not yet. In the café where he scrounges food for his cats, he sees a blond and blue-eyed hulk sprawled at a table, young and German and stoned to the gills, and Baumgartner's heart pounds in terror. For him this specimen of "racial purity" is the specter of the past, the incubus of destruction that Baumgartner thought he had escaped and all but forgotten.

When the owner of the café, eager to get rid of the junkie, persuades the old man to take the boy home for a while, he agrees, stifling his fear, for the sake of his cats. Frantic for drug money, the young German notices some bits of silver in Baumgartner's flat, and in the middle of the night he stabs the old Jew to death. The horror that gripped Hugo Baumgartner at the sight of this German was not so irrational after all.

Some readers will undoubtedly find Desai's violent resolution contrived and melodramatic, and others—nice, open-minded, determined to see every side of every question—will take offense at her seemingly unwarranted notions about Germanness and national character. Either way they will miss the point. She is not making rash assertions about the German psyche, but demonstrating the way a refugee's endurance of dispossession sears images of evil on his soul that neither time nor reason can obliterate. Hugo Baumgartner believes, cannot help believing, that he must pay the penalty again and again for his otherness, his darkness. Baumgartner's premonitory terror, far from being a suspect literary device, has the force of inevitability because Desai is tapping the experience of history in all its murderous perversity. And that is why she is persuasive.

Among the novelists who write in English about India today, the names that come immediately to mind, for American readers, are Ruth Prawer Jhabwala and Salman Rushdie, very different literary sensibilities who share the great subject of India. Anita Desai offers us yet another way of thinking and feeling about the country, and deserves to be as widely known and appreciated as the others. Though they have little in common as writers, Jhabwala, Rushdie, and Desai have singly and together put paid to the travelogue idea of India as a land of exotic mystery and eternal beauty. Desai has driven the point home in her scathing portrait (in *Clear Light of Day*) of an Indian diplomat who intones with oily complacency that he never discusses "famine and drought and caste wars and political disputes" with foreigners, but informs them only of "the great, immortal values of ancient India . . . eternal India."

What distinguishes the voice of Anita Desai is the physical intensity of her prose, the range of her capacious intelligence, her unsentimental compassion. She has brought it all together with a formidable surge of power in *Baumgartner's Bombay*, and it is a triumph.

**PEARL K. BELL** is a writer who lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**CORRESPONDENCE** *continued from page 6*

## Proper Conduct

**To the editors:**

Joseph Treen's commentary on the Superconducting Super Collider ("Black Hole," February 20) displays a numbing poverty of spirit. The unstated premise is that there is nothing wrong with retiring from endeavors in which we have traditionally been leaders. But pioneering research not only brings short-term economic gains, it attracts some of the world's best minds, to inspire and train the next generation of researchers. The long-term advantages are apparent to those U.S. firms establishing European branches to be near developing science they cannot find at home. We must not take the fact that science is done elsewhere as an excuse to abdicate the privileges and responsibilities of a wealthy and enlightened nation, or to deny ourselves the benefits of conducting research here. Learning secondhand the results of scientific research is no substitute for taking part in the creative act.

CHRIS QUIGG
*Berkeley, California*

**TRB** *continued from page 4*

contrary, he seems to be trying to model himself on Boston's Ray Flynn, another working-class Irishman who beat a black candidate and then went on to become a racial healer.

Perhaps Jackson is trying to protect his base. Some base. According to a recent *Chicago Sun-Times* poll, a plurality of Chicagoans view Jackson unfavorably. Even among black Chicagoans, 22 percent view him unfavorably, including 13 percent who declare themselves "very unfavorably" disposed toward him.

Chicago, in short, has become a good town for Jesse Jackson to get out of, fast. As it happens, he has another place he can go, a city he's been trying to break into for years, albeit by a different route: Washington, D.C.

The District of Columbia has a mayoral election coming up next year, and Jackson could have the job for the asking. He has a home here, his kids went to school here, and voters here love him: he won 1984's D.C. presidential primary by a 2-1 margin, last year's by 4-1.

Jackson might not turn out to be much of a mayor, but he could hardly fail to look good by comparison to what had gone before. At the very least he would perform the signal service of displacing a corrupt, incompetent municipal administration that has become a global embarrassment. The D.C. mayoralty is a hard job, but Marion Barry is an easy act to follow. By moving from Chicago to Washington, Jackson, to paraphrase the old joke, would raise the level of political leadership in both cities.

The fledgling mayor would presumably have to pass up his usual hopeless presidential run in 1992. But as chief executive of the capital of the Western world, he would have the platform he needs for his running commentary on national and even international affairs. And in 1996, assuming he had done a halfway decent job, he could rejoin the presidential fray with something new to boast about: credentials. No longer could it be said that Jesse Jackson had never been elected anything, had never held public office, had never *done* anything about drugs, crime, and education.

By becoming mayor of Washington, Jackson would at last move from the world of speeches and symbolism to the world of action and accomplishment. And this, far more than his loyalty to the incumbent, is why he will almost certainly forgo the opportunity. He'd have to put up or shut up—the two things, judging from his record so far, he is most afraid to try. It's so much safer just to run, run, run.

**HENDRIK HERTZBERG**



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# PHILADELPHIA DIARIST

## Warm Spit

FOR THE THIRD TIME IN AS MANY years, the center-right Democratic Leadership Council has chartered a train to take several hundred legislators, lobbyists, financiers, and journalists on a weekend of soul-searching to figure out why the party keeps losing the White House. Last year was Williamsburg. This time the train points north, toward Philadelphia. On board is Ron Brown, the new party chairman, attempting to work the entire lurching eight-car train, shaking hands that are juggling complimentary champagne and canapés. Brown was not the first choice of the DLC. In fact, he typifies what the DLC people think ails the Democrats; even if the white South can accept Brown's race, he's still a liberal. Sam Nunn warns, "He's got to establish his independence not just from Jesse Jackson but from Ted Kennedy." Brown, however, is eager to reassure all wings of the party; he has prepared a friendly, conciliatory speech, his first at a major party event since his election a month ago. (His predecessor, Paul Kirk, also a Kennedy man, boycotted the DLC until his final year in office.) Race aside, Brown has a résumé that speaks of a career track the DLC understands: prestige college; Washington rep of the moderate Urban League; Senate staff service; and thence to a powerful Washington law/lobbying firm, where he earned a high six-figure income. Mr. Insider to Jesse's Rev. Outsider.

THE DLC WAS FOUNDED AFTER the 1984 Mondale debacle, on the premise that the center-right had to take the party back from the liberals, the special interest caucuses, and the AFL-CIO. This is music not only to the ears of the white South and the foreign policy hardliners, but to organized business. The DLC raises its money from Washington corporate reps, at $2,500 each. A corporate membership costs an additional $5,000 or more. The DLC will soon launch its own think tank, with a budget of $1.5 million. Since 1985, however, the DLC has mellowed. Many party liberals now attend these meetings, too, because it is one of the few party forums where grand strategy is debated. Once derided as the White Boys' Caucus, this DLC meeting will spotlight several blacks: Representative Bill Gray, the official host and new chair of the House Democratic Caucus, the organization that spawned the DLC; Doug Wilder, who could be the next governor of Virginia; Chairman Brown; and remarkably enough even the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who has been invited to participate in a panel on "Rebuilding a Presidential Majority."

THE DLC, SEEKING THE AMERICAN mainstream, is big on patriotic shtick. The conference is called to order by a Crier ("Hear Ye, Hear Ye . . ."), who in turn introduces "Ben Franklin," complete with colonial garb, granny glasses, and homilies. Watching Ben Franklin open the conference is only a bit more surreal than watching Jesse Jackson hijack it. The centerpiece of the morning is a research paper by Professor William Galston of the University of Maryland, formerly issues director of the Mondale campaign, arguing quite convincingly that the strategy of reaching downward to the poor, the disaffected, and the unregistered, offers hopeless electoral arithmetic. Most of the assembled pols agree with "Dr. Gallstone," as Florida Senator Bob Graham calls him. But Jackson vehemently dissents. Ten states with 160 electoral votes were lost in 1988 "by less than the margin of unregistered African-Americans," he insists. Jackson has a seemingly endless supply of fresh rhymed couplets of political folk wisdom. He divulges that he had a private two-hour meeting earlier in the day with Senators Nunn and Robb: "We're in the same boats, looking for the same votes," he says, but "the issue is not just who leads us, but who needs us." Jackson, wickedly, challenges the assembled legislators and corporate lobbyists to join him on the Machinists' picket line. "If Lorenzo can't fly, let the workers buy."

"YOU GAVE MY SPEECH," SAYS A voice. Incredibly, it is Senator Chuck Robb, sounding slightly nonplussed. Robb commends Jackson. In fact, he commends Jackson several times—for coming to the meeting, for embracing traditional social values, for bringing new people into the party, for his charismatic appeal. But if only Jackson could stop pitting "us against them." Jackson, however, is having none of it. "We've got to decide which side of history we're on," he says. "If we become all things to all people, we become ill-defined . . . rather like warm spit." Despite the carefully orchestrated unity, tomorrow's lead is, inevitably, Jackson sassing Robb. No matter how much you stroke him, the guy just won't play ball.

BEN WATTENBERG IS PRESENT, AS quasi-official ideologist. Wattenberg introduces a documentary, wittily tracing the recent history of party schisms over the Vietnam War, cultural radicalism, race, reform vs. regularity, and party rules. These fights killed the party, Wattenberg explains. They scared away the middle class. Now mainstream Democrats are on the verge of reclaiming middle-class values, says Wattenberg, but the Jackson radicals are getting in the way. "Are you saying let's take this guy on?" asks Florida Representative Buddy MacKay. "Absolutely," replies Wattenberg. "Let's have it out. . . . Sometimes a good fight is cleansing."

WATTENBERG ECHOES GALSTON in saying that national security and personal security are "threshold" issues for Democrats. Only when middle-class voters trust Democrats to be reliable on crime, traditional moral values, and military strength can they win a hearing on their traditional source of voter appeal: economics. "The Democrats' great strength," Wattenberg intones, sounding uncannily like Jesse Jackson, is still "little guy vs. big guy." Of course, the DLC audience for this insight is 90 percent corporate big guys. Your faithful diarist can't resist pointing this out. "The DLC," shrugs Wattenberg in reply, "is no different in this regard than the DNC."

STILL, THIS IS A HEARTENING event. The DLC has moved well beyond its original impulse in the post-Mondale era of simply moving right, and is cultivating surprising unity around the subtler proposition that Democrats could recapture the White House by being credible on defense and on social issues—even Jackson rails against "drugs and thugs"—and repairing to their traditional strength: activist government. There are tough, convincing sessions on the environment, on voluntary national service, and on education. Arkansas Governor Bill ("Turn off his TelePrompTer") Clinton makes up for his Atlanta convention disgrace with an eloquent plea for better schools, even embracing the dreaded T-word. "We need more taxes," he declares. "That's not revenue enhancement. It's taxes." Underlying this thematic unity, of course, are the party's old schisms over race, war, region, culture, and ideology. But the Democrats are in unusually good voice. By Saturday, Jackson has left town, and Ron Brown, with every bit of Jackson's dignity, is at the podium enthusiastically embracing the DLC's proposal for national service as a metaphor for the DLC's appealing theme that rights and responsibilities must be balanced. "Republicans," he deadpans, "think community service is something you are sentenced to after you are caught."

**ROBERT KUTTNER**



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